

Our Daily Devotional



F.B. Meyer

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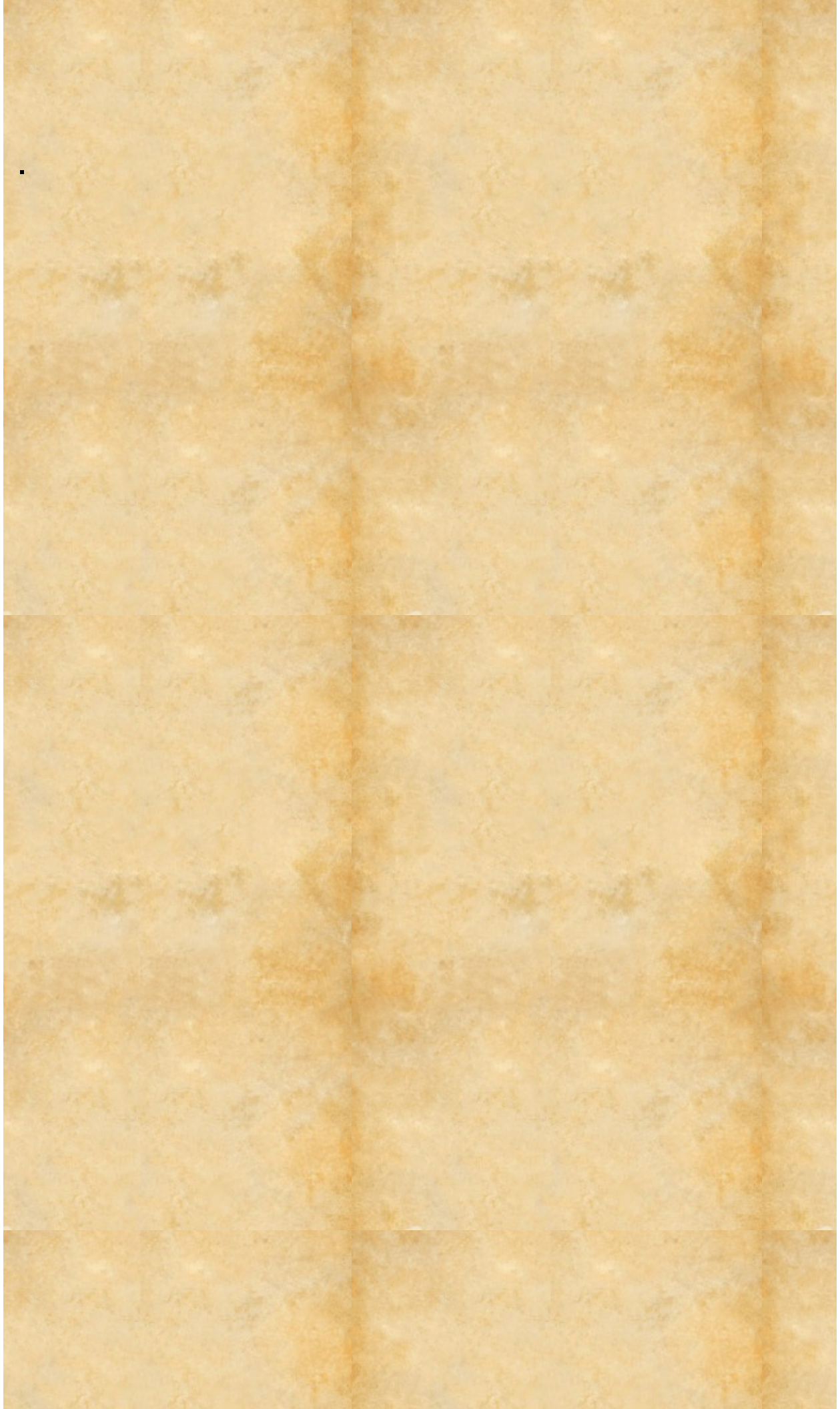
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Our Daily Homily

By

F.B. Meyer

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January

January 1

Psalm 32:8

“I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.”

“LEARN of Me,” (Matthew 11:29) said the Master: and indeed there is no teacher like Him; no school like His. We stand at the door of the school-house, saying, “What I know not, teach Thou me;” and He does not hesitate to undertake our case. But there are several points of difference from our methods. In Christ’s school there is but one Master for all the scholars, and they all learn from the same books; the pupils begin with the upper classes and end with the lowest; and those that are most proficient, and have been longest under His tuition, are most conscious of their ignorance.

There are no holidays; but every day is a holy day. The school never breaks up; but the students leave it for Home, and the prizes are sent after them, and given when they arrive.

We need more than personal instruction; we are travelling through an unknown land, and require direction for the way. This also is guaranteed; but not as in the cases of tourists, who extract all information from their friends before they start from home, as to the places they are about to visit. Our Guide accompanies us. He counsels us with His eye upon us, detecting

every pitfall and chasm, and warning us; perhaps even guiding us by the movement of His eye.

How greatly then are we in need of the quickened sense! The eye fixed on His eye; the ear open to His slightest whisper; the foot quick to place itself down in His footprints. The horse and mule need bit and bridle; but it is enough for us if the heart fears to miss the least indication of the Master's will. Be willing to know; it then becomes His part to make thee know somehow. If not in one way, then in another.

January 2

Psalm 33:5

“He loveth righteousness and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of the LORD.”

THE Psalmist means that there is no spot in it where the traces and footprints of God's love may not be discerned, if only the eyes and the heart are opened. Just as every corner of a room which faces the south is filled with the morning sunlight, unless artificial and violent means are adopted to keep it out, so every part of human life is full of God's lovingkindness, unless it is blocked out by sin. You think that your lot is absolutely destitute of God's lovingkindness; but may not your eyes be blinded? May there not be more than you suppose? May you not be so occupied with the one irksome thing in it as to be oblivious to ten thousand marks of tender compassion and unobtrusive mercy?

Your chamber is very bare and comfortless; but it is part of the earth, and it is therefore full of God's lovingkindness: look

around for it. Your home seems uncongenial and trying; but it must be full to the brim of lovingkindness. Your daily life is hard and difficult; but there is as much lovingkindness in it as if it were easy and prosperous. There is indeed more lovingkindness in these trying and difficult surroundings than in happier ones. It costs God more to give us pain. We need more love, and we get it. We should rejoice in it if our eyes were opened.

The loveless heart can detect nothing but disappointment and unkindness. But the heart that loves, and sings, and rejoices in the Lord, detects the evident tokens of God's love; just as the child of nature knows when friend or foe has passed through the forest-glade, by indications which would be unintelligible to our unpracticed eye. Echo always answers in the same key in which we address her!

January 3

Psalm 34:18

"The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit."

WHAT broke your heart? Unkindness? Desertion?

Unfaithfulness on the part of those you trusted? Or did you attempt to do something which was beyond your power, and in the effort, the heartstrings snapped? A bird with a broken wing, an animal with a broken leg, a woman with a broken heart, a man with a broken purpose in his life — these seem to drop out of the main current of life into shadow. They go apart to suffer and droop. The busy rush of life goes on without them. But God draws nigh. The Great Lover of man is always at the best when the lights burn low and dim in the house of life. He always comes

to us then. He shall sit as the Refiner.

Where do you see love perfected? Not between the father and his stalwart son who counts himself independent, or between the mother and the girl in whom love is awakening in its first faint blush: but where the crippled child of eleven years lies in the truckle-bed, pale and wan, unable to help herself. There the noblest fruits of love ripen and yield refreshment. The father draws nigh to the little sufferer, so soon as he gets home at night, and the mother is nigh all the time to sympathize and comfort and minister. So brokenness attracts God. It is dark; you think yourself deserted; but it is not so. God is there — He is nigh; call to Him — a whisper will bring a response.

“There, little one, don’t cry;

They have broken your heart, I know And the rainbow gleams

Of your youthful dreams

Are things of the long ago;

But heaven holds all for which you sigh— There, little one, don’t cry.”

January 4

Psalm 35:20

“For they speak not peace: but they devise deceitful matters against them that are quiet in the land.”

A SIGNIFICANT title for the saints, which has been adopted at least by one great religious body. In every age God has had his

quiet ones. Retired from its noise and strife, withdrawn from its ambitions and jealousies, unshaken by its alarms; because they had entered into the secret of a life hidden in God. We must have an outlet for the energies of our nature. If we are unfamiliar with the hidden depths of eternal life, we shall necessarily live a busy, fussy, frothy, ambitious, eager life, in contact with men and things. But the man who is intense on the eternal, can be quiet in the temporal.

The man whose house is shallow, but one room in depth, cannot help living on the street. But directly we begin to dwell deep — deep in God, deep in the watch for the Master's advent, deep in considering the mysteries of the kingdom, we become quiet. We fill our little space; we get our daily bread and are content; we enjoy natural and simple pleasures; we do not strive, nor cry, nor cause our voice to be heard in the street; we pass through the world, with noiseless tread, dropping a blessing on all we meet; but we are no sooner recognized than we are gone.

Get quiet, beloved soul; tell out thy sorrow and complaint to God. Let not the greatest business or pressure divert thee from God.

When men rage about thee, go and tell Jesus. When storms are high, hide thee in His secret place. When others compete for fame and applause, and their passion might infect thee, get into thy closet, and shut thy door, and quiet thyself as a weaned babe. For if thy voice is quiet to man, let it never cease to speak loudly and mightily for man in the ear of God. Oh to be a Quietist in the best sense!

January 5

Psalm 36:9

“For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.”

THERE are many dark things around us in which we detect light only when we behold them in the light which streams from the face of Jesus. In His light we see light in them. Yonder lies a bit of charcoal, black and opaque; and even when it has been changed by chemistry to crystals, it is dull and dense, so long as it is in the dark. Who could guess that such depths and fountains of light exist in that insignificant atom? But let it be brought into the rays of the morning sun, and as it flashes and glistens, in that light we see its light; fountains of light welling up; caverns of light, where the elves and fairies of childish story hide.

So it is of the Bible. —Its pages seem devoid of help and comfort, till we open them under the light of Jesus. Cleopas and the other learnt this on the road to Emmaus.

So it is of nature. —The Greek, lover of nature though he was, never saw in her face the loveliness which has been the theme of Christian poetry and art. In the light of Christ’s parables and allusions we see light.

“Heaven above is softer blue,

Earth around is sweeter green;

Something lives in every hue,

Christless eyes have never seen.

Birds with gladder songs o’erflow, Flowers with deeper beauties shine, While I know, as now I know,

I am His, and He is mine.”

So it is of human love. —There is a new preciousness,

tenderness, thoughtfulness, blessedness, where the love and light of Jesus reign in home and heart. We see a loveliness and beauty in our dear ones that had eluded us till we beheld them in the love of Jesus.

January 6

Psalm 37:4

“Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.”

ONE of Tauler’s hymns is a lovely specimen of how a man delights in the Lord. He takes a number of familiar instances of close affinity and interdependence, and applies them to the intimacy subsisting between him and his beloved Lord:— “As the bridegroom to his chosen,

As the king unto his realm,

As the keep unto the castle,

As the pilot to the helm,

So, Lord, art Thou to me.”

But we cannot delight thus without effort. We must withdraw our eager desires from the things of earth, fastening and fixing them on Him. The current of our being must set towards God. We must cultivate the habit of holy intimacy with Him, whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain. We must accustom ourselves to hold up before us the successive attributes and works of God, till they strike our admiration, and elicit our homage.

Then we shall find rest unto our souls, because He will give us the desires of our hearts. When God Himself is our desire we shall be for ever delivered from disappointment, because we can always have Him; we shall be removed from risk of penury and want, because we can have as much of Him as we need; we shall be beyond the fear of loss, because He changes not. They who want God possess Him. To long for God is to have that for which you long. To delight in God is to delight in One, of whom there is an infinity for everyone, so that there need be no stint, no jealousy, no envy, no satiety. Everyone can have as much as he can hold. “For God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him” (John 3:34) that is, by meter. There is no gauge of our consumption!

January 7

Psalm 38:9

“Lord, all my desire is before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee.”

GOD knows our desires. We cannot always put them into words; we dare not trust them to the ears of our dearest, but they lie open to Him — the ideal we desire in our holiest moments; the thorn in the flesh from which we long to be delivered; the prayer for one who is dearer to us than life. “Lord, all my desire is before Thee.”

Think of the desires of the saints — for the realization of their ideals; for the salvation of men; for the glory of the Redeemer; for the Divine answer to the scoff, the sneer, the taunt of infidelity; for the coming of the King, the restoration of His ancient people, the setting up of the millennial reign.

“Lo, as some ship, outworn and overladen, Strains for the harbour, where her sails are furled; Lo, as some innocent and eager maiden Leans o’er the wistful limit of the world: “So even I, and with a pang more thrilling; So even I, and with a hope more sweet, Yearn for the sign, O Christ! of Thy fulfilling, Faint for the flaming of Thine advent feet.”

And remember, He who implanted the desire does abundantly above all we ask or think. There is always a defect in every earthly joy, a something which shows itself for a moment to elude us.

“It blossoms just beyond the paths I follow, It shines beyond the farthest stars I see; It echoes faint from ocean caverns hollow, And from the land of dreams it beckons me.”

But it never can be thus with any desire that God has taught us to cherish. Of these, as the ages pass, we shall say: It was a true report that I heard, but the half was not told. The desire which is directed to God cannot miss gratification.

January 8

Psalm 39:12

“Hear my prayer, O LORD, and give ear unto my cry; hold not thy peace at my tears: for I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were.”

SORROW and pain had taught the Psalmist some deep lessons touching the life of men around him — they seemed to be shadows pursuing shadows. They walked in a vain show, and were disquieted in vain. At their best estate, i.e., when most firmly rooted, they were only a breath, curling from lip or nostril

into the chill morning air, and then gone for ever. The outward life and activity of man seemed to him as the shadow which darkens for a moment a whole mountain side, and, whilst you look, it has been chased away by the succeeding sheets of sunshine.

Amid all these vanities, the child of God is a pilgrim to the Unseen. He passes through Vanity Fair, with his eyes steadily fixed on the Eternal City, whose Builder and Maker is God. Abraham first described himself as a stranger and sojourner, when he stood up from before his dead, and craved a burying-place from the sons of Heth. All his children, those who inherit a like faith, must say the same. Faith cannot find a home on this side of the stars. It has caught a glimpse of the Infinite, and it can never be content with anything less.

But we are sojourners “with God.” He is our constant companion.

What Greatheart was to the women and feeble ones, God is to each of His saints. We may be strangers; but we are not solitary. We may be compelled to relax our grasp from the hands of beloved ones; but never alone — the Father is with us. Good company, safe escort, is it not? In the strength of it, we may obey without reluctance or fear the old motto — *Habita, ut migraturus*: Live as about to emigrate.

“There is nothing greater than God; nothing less than I. He is rich; I am very poor, but I want for nothing.”

January 9

Psalm 40:7–8

“Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of

me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.”

THE writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews (Hebrews 10) lays great stress on these words. He says that this yielding up of Christ’s will to His Father’s was consummated on the cross, and was the inner heart of our Savior’s passion. “By the which will (surrendered and given back to God) we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” (Hebrews 10:10) He then proceeds to suggest that it is only as we enter into a living oneness with Jesus in this that we can pass from the outer court and have boldness to enter into the Holiest of all. This, he says, is the new and living way. Jesus entered into the Holiest because He gave Himself absolutely to His Father. We cannot expect to go thither till we have become possessed of the same spirit.

It is a solemn question for each. Have we all stood at the cross, as the slave of old at the doorpost of his master’s house, and said, “I love my Master. I will not go out free?” Have we been united to that cross, as by the boring of the awl? Have we so embraced the will of God that we are prepared to follow it, though it lead to the Cross and grave? Then one condition at least is fulfilled for our standing unabashed where angels veil their faces.

But there is yet another condition. We can have no right to stand within the Holiest, except through the blood of Jesus, shed for sin on the cross. This is necessary ere sinners can have boldness in the presence of Divine Purity.

When Rutherford was like to die of sore illness, instead of a martyr’s death, he said, “I would think it a more glorious way of going home, to lay down my life for the cause at the cross of Edinburgh or St. Andrew’s; but I submit to my Master’s will. Oh for arms to embrace Him!”

January 10

Psalm 41:1

“Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the LORD will deliver him in time of trouble.”

THE realm of Blessedness is all around. It may be entered at any minute, and we may dwell in it all the days of our life.

Our enjoyment of blessedness is totally undetermined by outward circumstances. If you stand in some great retail emporium and watch the faces of the women, you will be greatly instructed.

Yonder sits a richly-dressed lady with society and fashion, dress and money at her command, but her manner and tone are utterly weary and dissatisfied; whilst across the counter a girl waits on her, whose thin face and simple attire tell their own story, but her expression and bearing betoken the possession of an inner calm and strength, an inexhaustible fund of patience and sweetness. Such contrasts meet us everywhere. The realm of blessedness dips down into humble and lowly lives on every side of us. Have we entered it?

Christ's beatitudes give us eight gates, any one of which will immediately conduct us within its confines. But here is another: “Blessed is he that considereth the poor.” Even if you cannot help or relieve them to any appreciable extent, consider them; let them feel that you are thinking of and for them; do not hurry them when they recite their long, sad story; put them at their ease; treat them with Christian courtesy and consideration. Begin at once. There are plenty around you, who, if not poor in the things of this world, are poor in love and hope and the

knowledge of God. Tell them of “the blessing of the Lord,” which “maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it.” (Proverbs 10:22) Silver and gold you may have none; but such as you have be sure and give. Learn to consider people. Try and look on things from their standpoint.

January

January 11

Psalm 42:7

“Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.”

THERE are wonderful harmonies in nature. Voices call to one another across vast spaces. The depths below the firmament call to the heights above. The deep of the ocean calls to the deep of the azure sky. Listen, O my soul, to the mighty voices sounding ever through the universe of God.

The deep of Divine Redemption calls to the deep of human need. — It sometimes seems as though the opposite were true, and as though the cry originated in man; but it is not so. God is always first; and as He looks into hearts stricken and desperate, conscious of unfathomable yearnings, and infinite capacity, He calls aloud, and the depth of His heart appeals to the depth of the heart of man.

Would that it might ever answer back!

The deep of Christ's wealth calls to the deep of the saint's poverty. — He looks down upon our attenuated and poverty-stricken experience with an infinite yearning. He cannot endure that we should go through life naked and miserable, poor and blind, when He has got gold, and precious stones, and white raiment.

“Hear, O my people, and I will testify unto thee: O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto me; There shall no strange god be in thee; neither shalt thou worship any strange god. I am the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.” (Psalm 81:8-10)

The deep of the Holy Spirit’s intercession calls to the deep of the Church’s prayer. — He awakens in us groanings that cannot be uttered, and burdens us with the will of God.

Whatever depths there are in God, they appeal to corresponding depths in us. And whatever be the depths of our sorrow, desire, or necessity, there are correspondences in God from which full supplies may be obtained. Thou hast the pitcher of faith, and the well is deep.

January 12

Psalm 43:4

“Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy: yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God my God.”

WHAT a change within the soul one short hour spent in God’s presence will prevail to make! The psalmist is opposed by an ungodly nation, and resisted by a deceitful and unjust man.

He mourns because of the oppression of the enemy; he questions whether God has cast him off. Then led by those twin angels, Light and Truth, commissioned and sent forth for that purpose from the presence of God, he enters in thought and spirit within the precincts of the Divine Tabernacle, and stands before the Altar. Immediately the clouds break. Putting his puny hand upon the great God, he appropriates all He is and has, as though it were his own, and takes again, in a very ecstasy of

realizing faith, his harp, too long silent, and breaks into rapturous melody.

Have you not sometimes groped in the dark, till those two angels have come to lead you also to the altar where the High Priest stands? Then what a change! Your circumstances have not altered, but you have conceived a new idea of what God can be to you. You have said, This God is my God for ever and ever. You have said, O

God, my God! You have laid your hand on God's wealth and called it all your own. You have chided your soul for being disquieted and depressed whilst such a heritage is yours. You have spoken of God, first as the God of your strength; secondly, as the gladness of your joy; thirdly, as the health of your face.

“Why, therefore, should we do ourselves this wrong, Or others — that we are not always strong, That we are ever overborne with care, That we should ever weak and heartless be, Anxious or troubled when with us is prayer, And joy and strength and courage are with Thee?”

January 13

Psalm 44:4

“Thou art my King, O God: command deliverances for Jacob.”

BEFORE a man can say that God is his King, he must have very definitely consecrated himself to God. The relation of too many believers to Christ falls short of this supreme act of the soul; and in consequence their lives lack directness, power, victory over temptation. My reader, thou hast been sorely tried by overmastering temptations before which thy resolutions have

been swept as children's sand-heaps by the tide. Wilt thou quietly consider whether from the very depth of thy being thou hast ever said to God, Thou art my King. The kingship of Jesus is always associated with victory; and just as soon as His supremacy is acknowledged, He will begin to command deliverance and victory.

Behold, thy King cometh to thee, having salvation. Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and the King of Glory shall come in; but He is also the merciful Savior. Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Savior. It is always Prince first. If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, thou shalt be saved.

What a battle-shout this is! Whenever temptation is near; when the foe seems about to take the citadel by assault; when heart and flesh quail before the noise of battle — then to look up to the living Christ, and say, Thou art my King, O Son of God: command victory! There is no devil in hell but would flee before that cry of the tempted and tried believer; and God could not be neglectful of such an appeal. Jacob is only a worm; yet even he is more than a conqueror when God fights for him. It is thus that Jacob Behmen begins one of his letters: “May the Overcomer, Jesus Christ, through Himself, over come in as all His enemies.”

January 14

Psalm 45:1

“My heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the king: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer.”

THIS dignifies the meanest occupation. By this motive the apostles urged their converts to daily duty, slaves though they

were in the houses of rich and godless owners. They were taught to look upon their lot as the will of God; and to do service as unto the Lord, and not unto men, seeking the praise of God as their sufficient reward.

As we take in hand the bits of carved work which once stood high in the cathedral roof, but now lie almost hidden by rank vegetation, and consider the exquisite carving, which the artists never thought would be so minutely inspected, we feel that each unknown craftsman did his work for the King. There is no doubt that the religious intention of their work elevated their meanest toils to the level of sacred service. Let us endeavour each day to realize that everything may be done for Jesus which may be done at all. Do you take food? It is that the body may be deft and quick to execute his purposes. Do you rest and seek recreation? It is that your energies may be recuperated, and that the tide of nervous power may return with fresh vigor. Do you manufacture, buy and sell, advise and preach? All may be inspired by the one purpose, that His will may be done, His kingdom come — which is righteousness, peace, and goodwill to men.

Such a life, however, is only possible when the heart overflows, bubbles up and over, with goodly matter. The heart must always be in contact with the fervent love of Christ. It is only as the Divine heat passes into us that the affections will boil up and overflow in holy act. Let us make the things about the King before we speak them. Let us give time to muse, that the fire may burn.

January 15

Psalm 46:9

“He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh

the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire.” “MY soul is among lions: and I lie even among them that are set on fire, even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword.” (Psalm 57:4)

Such is the frequent confession of the child of God. Hemmed in by foes, the butt of vehement hate! But the moment comes at length when God arises to deliver. He utters His voice — the earth melts. In the night the enemy has wrapped up his tents and stolen silently away. War has ceased, and all the land of life lies plain and open.

God makes the wars of the outward life cease, so that as life’s afternoon comes the man who had fought his way through overwhelming odds — as a reformer, or inventor, or philanthropist — spends his years amid troops of friends and loving recognition.

God makes the wars of the home cease, so that the disturbing elements pass out, or are transmuted by invincible patience and love.

God makes the wars of the heart cease, so that Satan no longer annoys. The storm dies down, and the river which makes glad the city of God purls quietly through the soul. Sennacherib and his vast army lie as the leaves of autumn, silent in the last sleep.

If as yet God has not made your wars to cease, it is because He knows that you have still strength to fight on. Do not faint in the day of battle. Ponder those great words of Cromwell: “Call not your burden sad or heavy, for if your Heavenly Father sent it (or permitted it) He intended it to be neither.” It is through the fight that you are winning experience, strength, the approval of your Captain, and the crown.

January 16

Psalm 47:4

“He shall choose our inheritance for us, the excellency of Jacob whom he loved. Selah.”

“CHOOSE for us, our Father.” We say it deliberately. If were to give us our choice at this moment, though there is no one of us that does not cherish a secret longing too deep for words, we would put it back into His hand and say, “Thou knowest better than words can tell Thee what lies closest to our soul, but we dare not take the opportunity of snatching at it; Thou wilt give it or its equivalent in the sweetest form and at the most opportune hour.”

Would not this be the wisest attitude for any one of us to assume, believing, as we do, that our Father’s wisdom is only outshone by His love?

Wilt thou, O soul of man, standing at the foot of the Hill of God, ask thy Father to choose the track? He knows thy strength and powers of endurance; He knows also thy ardent yearning for the best. Subordinate thy choice to His in all things. Then whatever the difficulties may prove to be, dare to believe that they are less than any that would have opposed thee hadst thou chosen the route for thyself. Never look back; never doubt thy Father’s personal interest; the clouds that sweep darkly over thy path may hide Him from thee, but not thee from Him.

And thou, who hast had much experience of God, wilt thou not still say, He shall choose? Thou canst not repent the trust which thou reposedst years ago in His selection. Thou wilt not withdraw thy confidence. For evermore, whatever life may bring here or hereafter, we will cry, He shall choose, He shall choose. As Nicholas Herman said: “Pains and sufferings would be a

paradise to me which I should suffer with my God; and the greatest pleasures hell, if I could relish them without Him.”

January 17

Psalm 48:13

“Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following.”

THE pious Jew broke into exclamations as he considered the beloved city of his fathers. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth. In proud confidence he challenged the world of men to walk about Zion, count her towers, and mark her bulwarks.

Finally they were to traverse her palaces. But what Jerusalem was to the Jews, God’s lovingkindness is to us, as we think of it, in the midst of His temple. Let us consider its beauty and joy, its strength and glory. “For how great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty!” (Zechariah 9:17)

Traverse the rooms in the Palace of God’s love — that council-chamber of the eternal foreknowledge where we were chosen in Christ; this suite of apartments, which began with the disrobing-room of Bethlehem, and ended with the golden stairway of Olivet; those mansions of the Home-land which He is preparing for them that love Him; the pavilion whither He will lead His bride where He comes to take her to Himself: then look onward to the new heaven and the new earth, where God shall spread His tabernacle over His people, and all our loftiest ideals will be realized for evermore.

Life is a traversing of the successive rooms of the Palace of Love. They are not alike: each has its own beauty; each leads to

something better; in each God is All. Some seem to pass through the rooms veiled or blind; others miss seeing the King. But those who dare to look for Him everywhere, find Him. Always our Christ forever and ever; always our Guide even unto death, and beyond.

Always the present opening to something better, as the rosebud to the rose; as the acorn to the oak; as the chrysalis to the butterfly.

January

January 18

Psalm 49:5

“Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil, when the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about?”

HAVE I not God? At sundry times and in divers manners, He spake to, and succoured His saints. Will He not come to me, and cast around me the soft mantle of His protecting love? And if I love Him, do I need any beside?

“Who that one moment has the least descried (caught sight of) Him, Dimly and faintly, hidden and afar, Doth not despise all excellence beside Him, Pleasures and powers that are not, and that are?”

Did He not walk with Enoch, and then take him home, before the deluge came? Did He not shut Noah in, with His own hand, that there should be no jeopardy from the overflowing flood? Did He not assure Abram that He was his shield and exceeding great reward, quieting his fears against any possible combination of foes? Did He not preserve His servant Moses from the fury of Pharaoh and the murmurings of Israel? Was not Elijah hidden in the secret of His pavilion from the wrath of Ahab? Did He not send His angel to shut the lions' mouths that they might not hurt Daniel? Were not the coals of the burning fiery furnace as sweet and soft as forest glades to the feet of the three young confessors? Has God ever forsaken those that trusted Him? Has He ever given them over to the will of their enemies?

Wherefore, then, should I fear in the day of evil? I may be standing on the deck, whilst the ship is beset by icebergs and jagged splintered rocks; the fog drapes everything, as the way slowly opens through this archipelago of peril: but God is at the helm — why should I fear? Days of evil to others cannot be so to me, for the presence of God transmutes the evil to good.

January 19

Psalm 50:3

“Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him.”

THE years pass as snowflakes on the river; and as each drops into the mighty past, it cries, God will come! Each Advent season, with its cluster of services, herald-voices, reminiscences and anticipations, lifts the message clear above the turmoil and tumult of mankind, God will come! The disappointments of our fairest hopes, the overcasting of our sunrises, the failures of our politicians, statesmen and counsellors, to effect a permanent and radical improvement of man’s nature, all take up the word, Our God shall come!

“Surely He cometh, and a thousand voices Call to the saints and to the deaf and dumb; Surely He cometh, and the earth rejoices, Glad in His coming, who hath sworn, I come.”

Dear heart, get thee often to thine oriel window, and look out for the breaking of the day. Did not the Master assure us that He would soon return? Hearken, He saith again today, “Surely I come quickly.” (Revelation 22:20) The little while will soon be

over, and He will come first to receive His saints to Himself, and afterwards to come with them to the earth. Why are we disconsolate and dismayed? The perplexities of the Eastern problem, the gradual return of the Jews to Palestine, the despair and lawlessness of men, the unrest of nations, the preparedness on the part of the Church — like so many minute guns at night — keep the heart awake. Oh, let your eyes flash with the glow of thanksgiving! Be glad and strong, confident and calm. Let your loins be girded, and your lamps burning. Through heaven's spaces you shall detect the advent of your God; and when He comes He will break the silence of the ages with words of majesty and might.

January 20

Psalm 51:10

“Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.”

PERHAPS that is our chiefest need: especially so as we gird up our loins for a new stretch of pilgrimage. We do not need nobler ideals. They flash over our souls. We read of Browning kissing, on each anniversary of his wedding, the steps by which his bride went to the marriage altar; and we vow to lift our wedded life higher. We read of Henry Martyn mourning that he had devoted too much time to public work, and too little to private communion with God; and we vow to pray more. We recall the motto written on Green the historian's grave at Mentone, “He died learning;” and we vow that each day shall see some lesson learnt from the great store of Truth. We read those noble words of W. C. Burns, “Oh to have a martyr's heart, if not a martyr's crown;” and we vow to give ourselves absolutely to witness and suffer for Jesus. But, alas! our ideals fade within a few hours, and the withered

petals are all that remain. We need the steadfast spirit.

But this God can give us by His Holy Spirit. He can renew our will from day to day, and infuse into us His own unaltering, unalterable purpose. He can make possible, obedience to the apostolic injunction, “Be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.” (1 Corinthians 15:58) Hear what comfortable words the Apostle Peter saith: “The God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.” (1 Peter 5:10) Then we shall move resolutely and unfalteringly onward; like Columbus, undaunted by discouragement, we shall cross unknown seas, till the scent of the land we seek is wafted across the brief intervening distance.

January 21

Psalm 52:8

“But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God: I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever.”

IN its dress of evergreen, the olive is at all times a beautiful object.

Many reasons demand that we should resemble it. There are three ways of becoming like a green olive tree, mentioned in this and the following verses:— Trust in the mercy of God. — To trust when the light has burnt to its socket in the house of life, and the heart is as lonely as Job’s amid the wreck of his home. To believe that the mercy of God is not clear gone, nor His tender mercies have failed. To know that all is well, that seems most ill. This keeps the heart from withering.

Thanksgiving. — “I will give thee thanks for ever.” There is always something to thank God for. When someone condoled with the old slave woman, because she had only two teeth left, she replied quickly, “But I thank Him, honey, all the time, that they are opposite each other.” Find out with Paul something to be happy about, even when arraigned before a judge, on trial for your life. “I think myself happy, King Agrippa.” (Acts 26:2) Waiting on God. — Not always talking to Him or about Him, but waiting before Him, till the stream runs clear; till the cream rises to the top; till the mists part, and the soul regains its equilibrium.

This keeps the soul calm and still. The name of God is good, a wholesome theme for meditation, because it includes His nature.

To meditate on it is soul-quieting and elevating. O troubled one, get away to some quiet spot and wait on God! Look away from the wind and waves to the face of Jesus. The Divine Name is written on those dear features; and heaven looks forth from those true, deep, tender eyes. The house of God is a safe and sheltered place for his olive-trees!

January 22

Psalm 53:6

“Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! When God bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad.”

IT is wonderful to notice the many ways in which God brings us back to Himself. We may have been carried into captivity by a troop of anxieties or a horde of worries; by temptations like the sons of Anak; by pride and other evils, as when David found that

the Amalekites had carried off his belongings into captivity. Then God comes to the rescue: sometimes by a drawing felt throughout the soul; sometimes by a little word dropped by another; sometimes by an incident from a biography. Any one of these acts upon us as the sunbeams on frost — there is a meeting and yielding, a desire to get alone, confession of waywardness and wandering, and earnest petitions for renewal of the blessed past. Thus God bringeth back the captivity of His people.

Are you a captive, pining in some distant bondage? It is not surprising that you hang your harp upon the willows, and weep as you remember Zion — how you went with the throng, and even led them to the House of God, with the voice of joy and praise. And as you contrast the past and the present, it is well that your soul is cast down. But when the Lord brings again your captivity, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad.

Would it not be well to look out for your brother Lot if he has been carried off down the long Jordan Plain? Should you not arm and go to his rescue, as Abraham did? Perhaps the Lord would turn your captivity, if you sought to turn the captivity of others; and Melchizedek would meet you with the bread and wine.

“O my God!

Draw me still nearer, closer unto Thee Till all the hollow of these deep desires May with Thyself be filled!”

January 23

Psalm 54:1, 7

“Save me, O God, by thy name, and judge me by thy strength. ...

For he hath delivered me out of all trouble: and mine eye hath seen his desire upon mine enemies.”

THERE are only seven stanzas in this psalm. It is one of the briefer of David’s compositions. Written when the Ziphites told of David’s hiding-place and compelled him to shift his quarters, perhaps its brevity attests some hasty moment snatched from the hurry and bustle of the necessary flight. It is said that Mr. Gladstone made his memorable Latin version of “Rock of Ages” during an interval of a House of Commons debate. It is worthy of remark that, however hurried David might have been, and however great the responsibility resting upon him, he found time to turn to God for help. He had learnt the secret of abiding in the Divine Presence.

It is said of one, “He was so accustomed to the Divine Presence that he received from it continual succour upon all occasions. It was his continual care to be always with God, and to do nothing, say nothing, which should endanger the perpetual intercourse.” But obviously, this frame of mind depended on a previous dedication of himself as a freewill offering to God. There must be no division of interests, if God is to be all. You must consider yourself as a stone before a carver, whereof he is to make a statue — presenting yourself before Him that He may make His perfect image in you and do as He will with your life. You must realize that He has permitted this interruption of your peace, this intrusion of Ziphite hate. You must look beyond the hand that smites, to the Father who permits. Then the soul will rock itself to rest; and before you have been five minutes with God you will be able to say as David, “He hath delivered me.” Be of good cheer; rest on His Name; He will deliver you out of all trouble.

January 24

Psalm 55:22

“Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.”

WE all know the story of the man wearily trudging along the road with the burden on his back, to whom a friend offered a lift in his cart. To the latter's surprise the wayfarer sat beside him with his burden still strapped to his shoulder. “Why do you not put your burden down?” quoth he. “Thank you,” was the reply, “I am so obliged at your carrying me that I will not trouble you with my burden also.” And so he hugged it still. How many a child of God trusts Him with his soul, but not with his load! Yet if God has undertaken the greater, surely He may be trusted with the less. If He has borne thy sins, He can surely carry thy sorrows.

Thy burden is that which He hath given thee. Whatever it be — the weight of a church, the pressure of a family, the burden of other souls — thy Father hath given it thee. Give its pressure back to Him, whilst thou retaineth the salutary lesson of hourly patience and faith. God imposes burdens, to see what we will do with them.

We may carry them to our undoing, or we may cast them on Him for His blessed countenance.

“Oh for the faith to cast our load, E'en while we pray, upon our God,

Then rise with lightened cheer.”

Notice, that if we cast our burden, we must believe He takes it.

We must definitely leave it with Him, and count as a positive sin the temptation to reconsider it. When you cast your burden, God will take it, and will do more. He will sustain you. He will catch up

your burden and you, and bear you all the day long between His shoulders.

January

January 25

Psalm 56:13

“For thou hast delivered my soul from death: wilt not thou deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?”

IT has been a wonderful deliverance! The blood and righteousness of Christ have satisfied the demands of a holy law. Into our souls, dead in trespasses and sins, He has poured the power of an endless life. The very life of God Himself has become resident within us, through the grace of the one Man, Christ Jesus. We cannot be hurt by the second death. We have eaten of the flesh, and drunk of the blood of the Son of Man, and ours is the everlasting life. Death and the grave for ever behind us, whilst before is the city, whose streets are never shadowed by death or crying.

And will not God finish what He has begun? Has He given us life, and will He not give us all that is necessary for right and holy living? Does not the one necessarily involve the other, as the gift of the body involves the bestowment of food and clothing? Have we been saved by Christ's death? Shall we not also be saved by His life? Will it not be for the glory of God that we should walk worthy of the high calling? Trust Him, child of God, whatever the traps and pitfalls, whatever the slipperiness and difficulty of keeping a foothold; believe that He is able to keep you from stumbling, and that His ability is only exceeded by His love. Let your Guide bind you by a strong rope to Himself as you start

each morning in His company.

The answer to these reasonings, the fulfillment of our hopes, comes back to us from a verse in Romans 5, as rendered by combining the suggestions of Dr. Moule, and of Conybeare and Howson, "If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being already reconciled, we shall be kept safe by sharing in his life."

January 26

Psalm 57:2

"I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth all things for me."

IT seemed to David that he was condemned to spend his days in a lion's den; on every side were blasphemy and reproach; his enemies breathed out flames, and their slanders cut like swords.

But amid it all he steadily looked away to God, the Most High, who from His elevation would reach down to deliver, and would surely accomplish all that was necessary. It is a marvellous thing to consider that God is literally willing to perform all things in us, and for us, if only we will let Him. The mischief is that most of us insist on performing all things in the energy of our own resolve, in the strength of our own power. We shut God out of our life: and whilst He is coming to our help, we have forced ourselves, and offered the sacrifice to our own hurt.

Before, therefore, God will perform all things for us, as He did for His servant, we must learn, like him, to wait in His presence that He may teach us our absolute poverty and helplessness; that He may assure us of our need of absolute and unceasing

dependence; that He may open our eyes to see the well-spring which Hagar saw on the desert sand. The fixed heart (Psalm 57:7), fixed only upon God, set upon waiting His time, receiving His help, and doing all things according to the inspiration and energy of His Spirit, is absolutely essential.

Awake the dawn, O child of God (Psalm 57:8). Give thanks to God: sing His praises (Psalm 57:9): let thy aspiration be for His exaltation (Psalm 57:5, 11): let thy heart be fixed in its resolve to take deliverance from none other — and He will send forth His twin-angels, Mercy and Truth (Psalm 57:3). They will come, even into the lion's den, and save thee from those who would swallow thee up (Psalm 57:4).

January 27

Psalm 58:11

“So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.”

THIS is one of the imprecatory psalms, and some are seriously disturbed with what seems an unforgiving spirit on the part of the psalmist. We must remember, however, that he was brought up in a severer school than ours. The cliffs of Sinai are sterner than the undulations of the mountain of Beatitudes. He was impressed more by the righteousness and less by the love of God than we are. The true key to the solution of the difficulty which these words suggest is in the words quoted above, which show his zeal for the character of Jehovah.

We must remember that the great conflict of his time was — why the wicked were permitted to flourish. Their success seemed to suggest that God was indifferent to sin. The book of Job is filled

with controversy on the same theme: its chapters are filled with reasonings how God could be just, and allow the wicked to prosper, whilst the righteous suffered sore affliction. The psalmist, therefore, pleads that the wicked should be taken away with a whirlwind, that men may be compelled to admit that there is a God that judgeth. Let wicked men be put to shame and punished, then surely men will seek after righteousness because of the immunity it secures and the blessedness it offers.

Yes, child of God, there is a reward for thee. It is not in vain that thou hast washed thy hands in innocency. But it will not come in the coinage of honour of this age, else it would be evanescent and perishable. God is already giving thee of the eternal and divine — peace, joy, blessedness; and one day thou shalt be fully vindicated.

“Perhaps the cup was broken here --

That Heaven’s new wine might show more clear.”

January 28

Psalm 59:9, 17

“Because of his strength will I wait upon thee: for God is my defence. ... Unto thee, O my strength, will I sing: for God is my defence, and the God of my mercy.”

THIS contrast comes out in exquisite beauty. First, the soul waits upon God, its strength; and then to Him who had been its strength, it breaks into praise.

Notice the circumstances in which this psalm was composed.

Around the house lurk Saul's emissaries, gathering themselves together against him. At any moment they threaten to break in and murder him upon the psalmist's bed. Michal and he are reduced to their last straits, yet the hunted man finds opportunity to wait upon God. It is not that he asks for aught as a definite gift; but he waits on God Himself, still expectant, eager. There are times when we cannot tell God what He should do; we can only hush our soul, as a mother her babe, and wait patiently until He tells us what He has prepared.

Meditate on these three attributes. He is the God of your mercy, the Fountain from which pure mercy flows, and nothing but mercy; He is your High Tower, whom you may put between yourself and Saul's hate; He is your Strength, not that you receive strength from Him, but that you appropriate Him as your strength. Stay thus musing and resting, until in that very house, pent in and besieged, you shall break into song, singing of God's strength, singing aloud of His mercy in the morning.

There are many beleaguered souls in the world, who have learnt to put God between themselves and their besiegers, and to sing to Him.

"For the glory and the passion of this midnight I praise Thy Name, I give thee thanks, O Christ!

Thou hast neither failed me nor forsaken Through these hard hours with victory overpriced; Now that I too of Thy passion have partaken, For the world's sake, called—elected—sacrificed."

January 29

Psalm 60:1

“O God, thou hast cast us off, thou hast scattered us, thou hast been displeased; O turn thyself to us again.”

CAST off! There is a sense in which that can never be. God will not cast off from salvation any soul of man that has sheltered under the covert of His Almighty wings. He may withdraw the sensible enjoyment and realization of His presence; but He cannot cast off for ever, in the sense of consigning any fugitive to his foes or to the fate he dreads.

And yet there is a sense in which we are cast off, when we have been unbelieving and disobedient. Allowed to take our own way, that we may learn its bitterness; permitted to hunger and thirst, that we may know how evil a thing it is to seek our supreme good anywhere else than in God; given over to the tender mercies of the gods we have chosen, that we may be taught their helplessness. It was thus that God cast off His people. He showed them hard things, and allowed them to reap as they had sown.

But now they cry for restoration. Put us back, they say, into the old place; be to us what Thou wert, and make us to Thee as we were. Restore us again. He did it for Peter, putting him back to the front place in the Apostolic band; for Mark, allowing him, who had gone back in his first missionary journey, to write a Gospel; for Cranmer and many more, who in the first burst of fiery trial shrank back, but to whom He gave more grace. Believe in the restoring grace of Christ, who not only forgives, but puts back the penitent and believing soul where it was before it fell away. Indeed, it has been suggested that the prodigal fares better on his return than those who do not go astray. It is not really so. But there is much music and song when the lost is found and the dead lives.

January 30

Psalm 61:2

“From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I.”

DAVID is in the wilderness, fleeing from Absalom. It seems to him that he is at the end of the earth. “Love and Longing are potent magnifiers of space.” His soul seems wrapped in gloom; then, from afar, he sees the Rock of his salvation, and asks to be led thither, and set thereon.

Can you not see that rock? All the desert is baking like a furnace.

The very pebbles burn the hand like cinders. Nothing can abide the scorching glare but the little green lizards that dart to and fro among the stones. Sunbeams strike like swords on the head of the luckless travellers that dare to brave their glittering edge. But yonder there is a rock, rising high above the shimmering sands, and casting a deep black shadow on one side. Little lichens hide in its crevices, streaks of vegetation are enameled on its steep surfaces, and at its foot there are even a few rock-plants growing as best they can in the arid soil.

That is the higher rock—the rock higher than the traveler’s stature.

He makes for it; or if he is too faint and overwhelmed, he is led to it, and beneath its gracious shadow finds instant respite and repose.

The shadow of a great rock in a weary land!

Jesus will be all this to thee, dear heart. Thou hast got to the end of the earth and of thyself; call out to Christ, and He will bring thee, faint and ready to die, to Himself as the Shadow from the

heat. The Man of men can be this for thee, because He is higher than thou art. Higher than I, because of His Divine origin; higher, because of His perfect obedience; higher, because of His supreme sufferings; higher, because of His ascension to the right hand of power. Yet His side is scarred and cleft.

January 31

Psalm 62:1

“Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from him cometh my salvation.”

DR. Kay gives as the literal translation: “Only toward God my soul is in silence;” or, “Only for God waits my soul all hushed.” The noises of contending desires, the whispers of earthly hopes, are hushed: and the soul listens.

This is the test of true waiting. Wait before God till the voices, suggestions, and energies of nature become silent. Then only can God realize his uttermost of salvation. This was the secret of Abraham’s long trial. He was left waiting till nature was spent, till all expedients proving abortive were surrendered; till all that knew him pitied him for clinging to an impossible dream. But as this great silence fell on him, the evidence of utter helplessness and despair, there arose within his soul an ever-accumulating faith in the power of God; and there was no obstacle to prevent God realizing all, and beyond all, because all the glory accrued to Himself.

This is why God keeps you waiting. All that is of self and nature must be silenced; one voice after another cease to boast; one light after another be put out; until the soul is shut up to God alone. This process prevails equally in respect to salvation from

penalty, deliverance from the power of sin, and our efforts to win souls. O my soul, be silent! Hush thee! Wait thou only upon God!

Surrender thy cherished plans and reliances. Only when death has done its perfect work, will He bestow the power of an endless (an indissoluble) life.

“O Lord, my God, do Thou Thy holy will!

I will lie still!

I will not stir, lest I forsake thine arm, And break the charm,

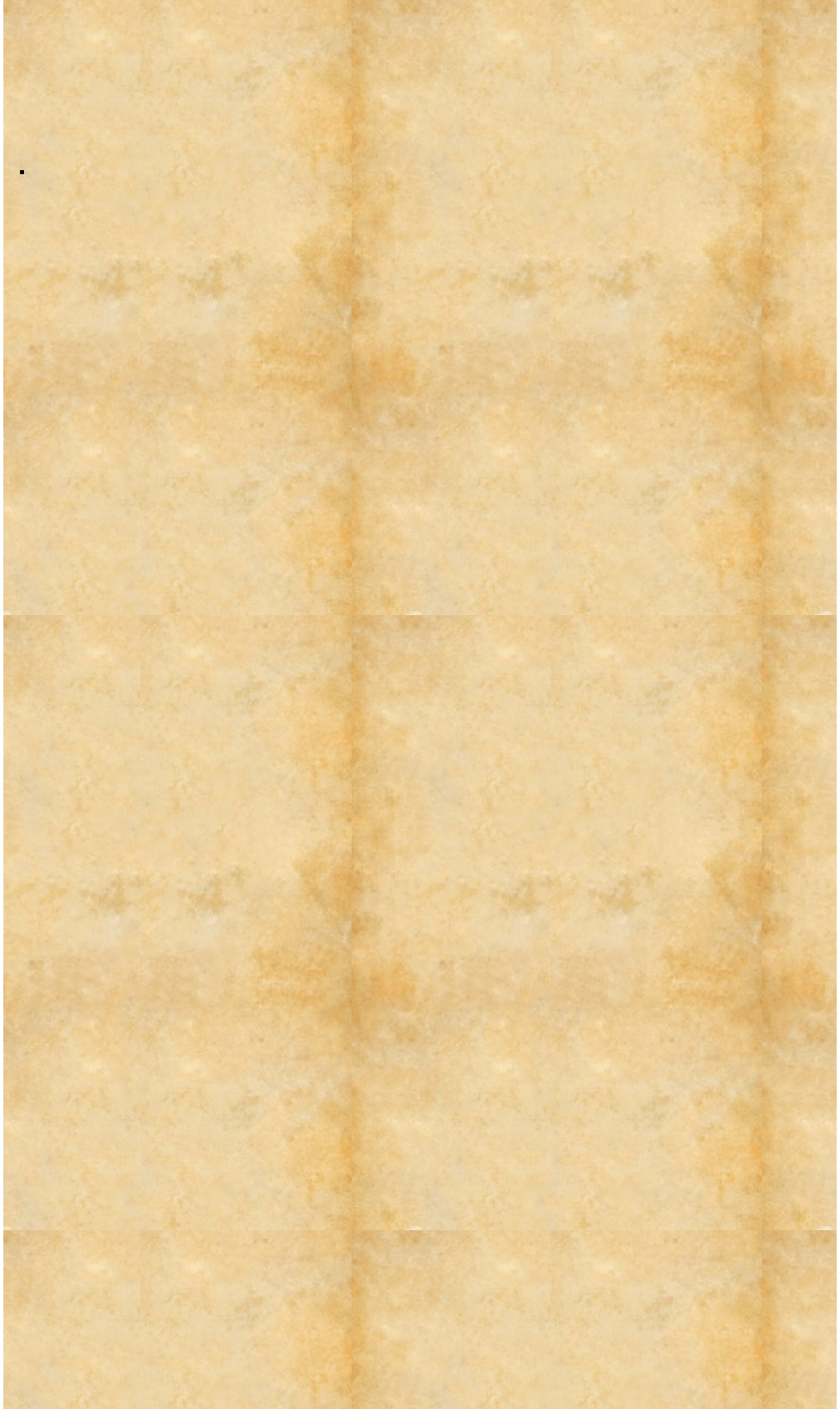
Which lulls me, clinging to my Father’s breast In perfect rest.”

Our Daily Homily

By

F.B. Meyer

- 1. February 1st through 7th**
- 2. February 8th through 14th**
- 3. February 15th through 21st**
- 4. February 22nd through 29th**



February

February 1

Psalm 63:8

“My soul followeth hard after thee: thy right hand upholdeth me.”

THIS is a marvelous saying. Literally rendered, the words are, “cleaves after Thee” — contact and eager pursuit. The metaphor which underlies it is obviously borrowed from the psalmist’s familiarity with the wilderness. It is a dry and thirsty land, where no water is: one says that he knows of a secret spring, whose waters are clear and cool, and offers to lead the thirsty one to its margin, lined with mosses and grasses. Instantly the soul starts in pursuit, and follows hard on the footsteps of the pioneer.

So when we are athirst for God, He comes, and, in the person of Jesus, leads us to Himself. He is Guide and Guerdon, Prompter of the impulse, and Promoter of its satisfaction. He excites the desire, offers to show us its sufficient supply, and finally brings us to his own lovingkindness, which is better than life. It becomes us, then, to follow hard after Him. Let us do as Jonathan’s armour-bearer, to whom the young prince said, Come up after me. And Jonathan climbed up upon his hands and feet, and his armor-bearer after him, and the Philistines fell before Jonathan, and his armour-bearer slew after him.

Follow hard after Christ, over hedge and ditch, through stubble and gorse, across dyke and brook, sometimes down the steep fall into the hollow, and again breasting the mountain slope, in the teeth of the pitiless blast. He has left an example that we

should follow His steps. The scent lies lightly; catch it ere it fade. What though the fresh blood marks the track — follow hard! Follow on to apprehend that for which thou wast apprehended. Press toward the mark. Let there be no needless space between the Master and thee.

February 2

Psalm 64:10

“The righteous shall be glad in the LORD, and shall trust in him; and all the upright in heart shall glory.”

ARE you glad in your Christian life? Gladness is the perquisite of children and childlike hearts, and there is nothing which is more distinctively characteristic of the work of grace in the heart than Christian gladness. The world may simulate it, but it is conscious of its dreary failure. Often faded worldlings will come to the true Christian, saying, What is the secret of your perennial gladness?

The glad heart is conscious of the love of God; knows that it is reconciled through the blood of the cross; realizes that there is nothing between itself and the light of the Father's smile; is conscious of rectitude in intention and tenderness of yearning love and pity. In every difficult circumstance it recognizes the Father's appointment; in every archipelago of rocks it is aware of the presence of God aboard the vessel, holding the helm and keeping the keel in the deepest current.

O souls, get right with God! avail yourselves of the perfect righteousness of Christ; watch that there be nothing between you and Him; walk in the light as He is in the light; cultivate the habit of considering what has been given rather than what has been withheld — and you will find that He will make you glad in

proportion to the days in which He has afflicted you, and the years in which you have seen evil. The sad heart tires in a mile. The glad one mounts up with wings as eagles. After his vision Jacob “went on his journey, and came into the land of the people of the east” (Genesis 29:1) “Oh for the joy thy presence gives—What peace shall reign when Thou art here!

Thy presence makes this den of thieves A calm, delightful house of prayer.”

February 3

Psalm 65:4

“Blessed is the man whom thou choolest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple.”

I WOULD be one of those favoured ones, my Savior. There is nothing that the heart can conceive, which is to be compared with this blessedness. The light of nature, the joy of friendship, the fascination of art and books, can give no such delight as this approach unto Thee, this dwelling in thy courts. But the longer I know myself, the surer I am that Thou must cause me to approach, that Thou must put forth extraordinary means for making me dwell.

So cause me to approach that I may dwell.

When thy soul has put up such a prayer as this, be sure that an answer will come. Thou mayest be brought nigh by an invisible but all-penetrating attraction, as when the sun draws the earth, or the magnet the needle: or perhaps God will answer thee by

terrible things in righteousness. There will be deep humiliations, solemn heart-searchings, sharp crucifixions, cherished purposes thwarted, the keenest pain, the most searching fire. But through all, there will come a growing tenderness and desire.

It was said by the late Mr. Spurgeon that he was not conscious of spending a quarter of an hour of his waking moments without a distinct recognition of the presence of God. And this will be true of us if we will trust the great High Priest to bring us within the vail, and keep us there. He entered that we may enter. He abides that we may abide. He stands in the Holiest that He may cause us to have a place of access among those that stand before the face of God. The anointing which we receive from Him will teach us how to abide.

This may well be adopted as a life-prayer: "Cause me to approach, that I may dwell in thy presence."

February 4

Psalm 66:10

"For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried."

SILVER is tried by fire, and the heart by pain. "We went through fire." (Psalm 66:12) But in the fire thou shalt not be burned; only thy dross shall be removed. The smell of burning shall not pass upon thee, for the form of the Son of God shall be at thy side.

"Be still, and He shall mould thee for his heritage of rest; The vessel must be shapen for the joys of Paradise.

And if the great Refiner in furnaces of pain Would do his work

more truly, count all his dealings gain.”

The main end of our life is not to do, but to become. For this we are being molded and disciplined each hour. You cannot understand why year after year the stern ordeal is perpetuated; you think the time is wasted; you are doing nothing. Yes, but you are situated in the set of circumstances that gives you the best opportunity for manifesting, and therefore acquiring, the qualities in which your character is naturally deficient. And the Refiner sits patiently beside the crucible, intent on the process, tempering the heat, and eager that the scum should pass off, and his own face become perfectly reflected in the surface.

Only be satisfied, with Archbishop Leighton, that nothing can befall thee but what has first passed concerning thee in the courts of heaven. And say with the saintly Fletcher: “I felt the will of my God like unto a soft pillow, upon which I could lie down and find rest and safety in all circumstances. Oh, it is a blessed thing to sink into the will of God in all things. Absolute resignation to the Divine will baffles a thousand temptations; confidence in our Savior carries us sweetly through a thousand trials.”

February 5

Psalm 67:7

“God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear him.”

THIS psalm is full of yearnings for the salvation of mankind. The selfish desire for the exclusive blessing of the chosen people is lost sight of in the catholic yearning that all the earth should fear Jehovah. Indeed, this is the ground on which the psalmist rests his personal claim for the Divine blessing. It is as though he said,

“We only ask for gifts of grace, that through us they may be transmitted to all mankind.” Turn us again, O God, that times of refreshing may come from thy presence to all men; our one desire is that the peoples may praise Thee.

We are reminded of those noble words of Andrew Fuller, to whom the initiation of modern missions to the heathen is so largely due: “We met and prayed for the heathen. We were drawn out of ourselves. God blessed us while we tried to be a blessing. Our hearts were enlarged, and we were baptized into a deeper sympathy with the soul-saving purposes of the Redeemer.”

Are we infected with this noble passion? Do we echo from our hearts the repeated prayer of this psalm: “Let all the people praise Thee”? (Psalm 67:3, 5) Do we ask for blessing from our own God, that we may be able to be a greater blessing to others? It is because God is “our own God,” (Psalm 67:6) that we are so anxious to make Him known. Oh that we might be carried out to sea on the tide of God’s purposes, and yearnings, and pity; and long as the psalmist did that his saving health might be known among all nations!

“Whoso hath felt the Spirit of the Highest, Cannot confound, nor doubt Him, nor deny; Yea, with one voice, O world, though thou deniest, Stand thou on that side, for on this am I”

February 6

Psalm 68:19

“Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation. Selah.”

NEVER tired or out of patience, that mighty God, of whose

advent the psalmist is so full, daily bends beneath our burdens, and sets Himself to help us through crushing difficulties. They are unbearable to us, but to Him only a very little thing. If He taketh up the isles as a very little thing, surely your heaviest burden must be less.

But our mistake is that we do not realize that God is bearing our burdens. We think that we must cope with them; we let ourselves worry, as though we were the loneliest, most deserted, most pitiable beings in existence, when all the while God is going beside, ready to bear our burdens. The burden of our sins; of our anxieties about ourselves, and about others; of our frailties and infirmities; the responsibility of keeping us; the pressure of our daily need — all these rest daily on our God.

“’Tis enough that He should care;

Why should we the burden bear!”

Oh, do not carry your burdens for a single moment longer; pass them over to Him who has already taken your eternal interests to His heart. Only be patient, and wait on Him, and do not run to and fro seeking for help from man, or making men your consolers and confidants. Those who do this have their reward. But as for you, anoint your head and wash your face, so as not to excite the pity of others. “Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.” (1

Peter 5:7) But, when it has been cast, leave it with Him. Refuse to yield to anxious suggestions, and forthwith burst out into a song of thankful confidence. Bless Him! Praise Him! Be glad, and rejoice!

When the heart is lightened of its load, it will soar.

February 7

Psalm 69:1

“Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul.”

MATTERS sometimes become desperate. For days the waters have been out on the lowlying lands, and slowly rising against the embankment, in the shelter of which some house is situated. Now, however, they have undermined and swept it away. With a crash it has fallen into the yellow foaming waters.

A moment's agitation, and then not a trace of it. There is nothing now to keep back the flood, and it comes into the home, rising stealthily up the walls. In the life of the soul such a crisis comes not infrequently. You have dreaded something, and the cold chill of fear has cast a shudder over you; but surely it could never come to you!

There is that protection, that barrier, of position, money, wealthy friends. But one by one these are swept aside, and the waters come ever nearer, till there is nothing between them and the soul. They come in unto the soul.

It is well for a man to be able then to turn to God with the “Save me” of the psalmist. God must have the entire trust of our soul.

He takes away all that lies between Him and us, that we may hang on Him, and lie naked and open to Him in our utter helplessness.

From the midst of your sorrows, from the deep sin in which you are sinking, from the deep waters that overflow you, cry to God.

He knows your foolishness; your sins are not hid from Him. He will stretch out His right hand and catch you, saying, “O thou of

little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?” (Matthew 14:31) Then our crying and tears will be turned to joyous shouts. We shall praise the name of God with a song, and magnify Him with thanksgiving; for the Lord heareth the needy, and despiseth not his prisoners (Psalm 69:30, 33).

February

February 8

Psalm 70:5

“But I am poor and needy: make haste unto me, O God: thou art my help and my deliverer; O LORD, make no tarrying.”

“MAKE haste!” Our frail patience gives out full often. We think that God is never coming. So many days I have waited for Thee, and as yet there has not been one symptom of Thine approach. Why are Thy chariots so tardy? Lazarus is dying; a few hours more, and life will have ebbed away. Provisions are failing and water is scarce, and still the enemy is entrenched in proud security. The world scoffs; but Thou comest not down the mountain slope, bringing salvation. Where is the Pentecost of which Thou speakest? Where Thy Second Advent?

But God is making haste. On the wings of every hour, quicker than light leaps from world to world, He is on His way. Delays are not denials, but are necessary to the perfecting of his arrangements.

“Behold, I come quickly!” (Revelation 3:11; 22:7; 22:12) is still true, though nineteen hundred years have passed.

We do not wish the destruction of our enemies, but their salvation. We long that God should be magnified, and souls saved.

We yearn for the setting up of the Kingdom of God, which is peace on earth, and blessing. And for this end we desire that God should accelerate His coming. O God, make no tarrying! Thine enemies boast themselves; our spirits faint for fear; men are sinking into perdition. Make haste!

Thy God will not be a moment overdue. When the fourth watch breaks, He will interpose. Not too soon for education; not too late for deliverance. But dare to believe that He is never absent. He is near thee all the while, bending over thee and all men, with tender pity, only waiting till He can see, with infallible wisdom, the best instant to interfere.

February 9

Psalm 71:20

“Thou, which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth.”

GOD shows us the troubles. We stand beside Him, and the mighty billows break around, but are shivered into myriads of drops. As we ride beside Him in the chariot of salvation, He points out to us the forms of dreaded evils, the ravines, the glaciers, the awful steeps; but it is as though we were cradled in some soft golden cloud which fringes the edge of the precipice, and glides along splintered cliffs where the chamois could not find footing.

Look at this, saith our Guide. These are the troubles that overwhelm souls, and drain their life! Behold them, but thou shalt not suffer them! I show you them that you may know how to

comfort and help those who have been overwhelmed. Sometimes, as this part of our education is being carried forward, we have to descend into “the lower parts of the earth,” pass through subterranean passages, lie buried amongst the dead. But never for a moment is the cord of fellowship and union between God and us strained to breaking; and from the depths God will bring us up again.

Never doubt God. Never say that He has forsaken or forgotten.

Never think that He is unsympathetic. He will quicken again. There is always a smooth piece in every skein, however tangled. The longest day at last rings out the evensong. The winter snow lies long, but it goes at last. Be steadfast; your labour is not in vain.

God turns again, and comforts. And when He does, the heart which had forgotten its psalmody breaks out in jubilant song, as does the psalmist's.

“I will thank Thee with the lyre, even thy truth, my God; I will harp unto Thee with the harp, Thou Holy One of Israel; My lips shall sing aloud when I harp unto Thee, And my soul which Thou hast redeemed.”

February 10

Psalm 72:6

“He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth.”

AMOS speaks of the king's mowings. Our King has many scythes, and is perpetually mowing his lawns. The musical tinkle

of the whetstone on the scythe portends the cutting down of myriads of green blades, daisies, and other flowers. Beautiful as they were in the morning, within an hour or two they lie in long, faded rows. Thus in human life we make a brave show, which passes away like the beauty of grass, before the scythe of pain, the shears of disappointment, the sickle of death.

There is no method of obtaining a velvety lawn but by repeated mowings; and there is no way of getting tenderness, evenness, sympathy, but by the passing of God's scythes. How constantly the Word of God compares man to grass, and his glory to its flower!

But when grass is mown, and all the tender shoots are bleeding, and desolation reigns where flowers were bursting, it is the most acceptable time for showers of rain falling soft and warm.

O soul, thou hast been mown. Time after time the King has come to thee with His sharp scythe. Thou hast sadly learnt that all flesh is grass, and that the efforts of thy self-life are vain. Where are the kingcups and butter-cups of thy pride? They are laid low that thou shouldest bear better crops than ever; and that thou mayest do so, lo, He comes down as spring rain! He comes down; thus you have the miracle of His condescension. He comes down like rain; there you have the manner of His gentle advent. He comes on the mown grass; there is His expectancy, showing that His reason in mowing, followed as it is by the gentle raindrops, lies in the direction of new beauty and use. Do not dread the scythe — it is sure to be followed by the shower.

February 11

Psalm 73:1

“Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart.”

GOD is only good. Such is the better rendering of the original.

He makes “all things work together for good to them that love God.” (Romans 8:28) However unlike goodness something in your lot may be, turn from the suggestions of sense to the affirmations of faith, and dare to say,

“His every act pure blessing is,

His path unsullied light.”

Nothing so glorifies God as when a Cowper, rescued from the border of despair, snatched from committing suicide, dares still to cling to his belief in the goodness of God.

Our faith is sometimes assailed, as Asaph's was, by the anomalies we meet with in the world. The wicked prosper, whilst the waters of a full cup are wrung out to the people of God. The scribes and Pharisees greedily devour widows' houses, and prey on the helpless; whilst earnest merit seeks for work and recognition in vain. It is a strange world, full of contradictions, perplexities, and insoluble questions; but through it all God's children must dare to affirm that He is only good. You do not feel it? Nevertheless, reason, Scripture, experience, demand that you should assert it. The fact is, we have lost the standpoint of vision. The psalmist found these things too painful till he went into the sanctuary of God, and then he understood. Do not take earth as the centre of the universe, but the sun. Do not look at God from circumstances, but at circumstances from God. Live continually with Him: then will mystery become unraveled, and dark problems solved. Above all, be pure in heart, free from the stain of sin, with one purpose. Thou shalt see the soul of good in what seems evil.

February 12

Psalm 74:20

“Have respect unto the covenant: for the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty.”

WHAT a marvelous ejaculation! Here is a broken heart, pouring out its wail into the ear of God about his sanctuary and city.

His adversaries have broken into the sacred precincts, and have hewn down its exquisitely carved work with hammer and hatchet.

They were as men who lift up the hatchet against a forest of trees.

There is nothing more utterly sad than the lament, “We see not our signs: there is no more any prophet: neither is there among us any that knoweth how long.” (Psalm 74:9) But from it all the suppliant rises to a climax of insistent appeal, and bids God have respect unto the covenant, made centuries before with Abraham and his seed. This was an appeal which struck right home to the heart of God. He could not deny Himself.

Here is an attitude in prayer, which can only be taken when the soul has become intimate with God, and come to close grip with Him. When every other reason has been marshaled, and every argument alleged; when still the answer tarries, and the case is desperate, then turn to God, and say, “Thou canst not run back from the terms of the covenant to which Thou hast pledged Thyself. This is included in the bond of agreement. I claim that Thou shouldst do as Thou hast said.”

The covenant is set out at length in Hebrews 8. It will cover all

the exigencies of our lives. And by Galatians 3:14 we may also place ourselves under the provision of the threefold covenant which God ratified with Abraham. In every trial, when desiring any blessing, when the crashing blows of the adversaries' hatchet are heard, turn to God, and say, "Have respect unto the covenant: ..."

(Psalm 74:20) which Jesus is the Mediator and his blood the seal.

February 13

Psalm 75:7

"But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another."

THIS is the psalm of uplifts. Against the uplifts of the wicked, described in the fourth verse, the psalmist contrasts the uplifts of God. They come neither from East nor West, but from above.

God is the supreme arbiter of human destiny. The horns of the wicked are cut off, and those of the righteous are lifted up, by the interpositions of his Providence for God is judge.

Are you depressed today? Look up to Him, and ask that you may be uplifted into fellowship with the risen glorified Lord. The Ascension of our Lord is the measure and example of our own. Are you lying among the pots? Seek for the wings of the dove, that with flitting pinion you may make your way to the Ark, where the hand awaits to take you in. Have you been in the valley of the shadow of death? Claim that the mighty power which wrought in Christ when God raised Him from the dead, and made Him sit in the heavenlies far above all power and principality, may do as much for you.

This is also true in a temporal sense. Promotions in any direction, to positions of credit, influence, or consideration, are the gift and work of God. To be lifted up to a chief place in his Church, to the stewardship of large wealth, to the exercise of commanding influence, is due to the Divine interposition. You do not hold it at the caprice of man, but as the direct bestowment of your Father. Do not fear to lose it because you are true to Him. He expects you to be true to Him. He has put you where you are for no other purpose than that you should realize His purposes among men. "A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven." (John 3:27) But if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory?

February 14

Psalm 76:10

"Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain."

FROM this review of the fate of the foes of Israel, the psalmist comes to this conclusion. He has seen the serried hosts of Sennacherib come up against the city of God, but the warriors have slept their sleep: it was as though the Almighty had snapped the instruments of war across his knee. The wrath of man had been allowed up to a certain point, to bring into clear evidence the greater power of God; and then He had quietly put a term to its further manifestation.

Pharaoh's wrath against Israel only served to make God's mighty arm conspicuous. So with Herod, who took Peter to behead him; and with the high priests who fumed against the early Church. So shall it be with the arch-enemy of all. Christ is mightier than he.

All he has done has acted as a foil to our Lord's glorious majesty. What he has wrought against man has only brought out more of the grace and the love of God. So shall it be to the end, when there shall be an eternal limit put to his hellish deeds, for he shall be bound by a great chain and cast into the bottomless pit.

Ah, tried soul, what is permitted to happen in your life will tend ultimately and eternally to the praise and glory of God, if only you will abide in Him, and suffer bravely, nobly, in the grace of Christ. And there always will be a restraint. There will always be a "thus far and no farther." God's faithfulness will not let us be tempted above that we are able. When the lesson is learnt, and the opportunity for the revelation of God is complete, and the tried soul is proved to have won as its reward the crown of life, then God will slay the enemy and avenger, and give spoils more glorious than mountains of prey.

February 15

Psalm 77:19–20

"Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known. Thou leddest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron."

THIS is almost the climax of sublimity, because of the contrast of the majesty and gentleness of God. In the first of these verses you have the former. God is described as wading through mighty oceans as a man might ford some tiny stream. The Atlantic with fathomless depths is no more to Him than a brook to us — not so much. But as the brook hides the footmarks which are imprinted on its soft ooze, so are God's footprints hidden. We cannot detect His great and wonderful secrets. We are unable to gauge His reasons. He marches through the ages with steps we cannot

track.

For His orbit there is no standard of computation.

But dread Him not. This mighty God has the tender heart of a shepherd. He leads His people like a flock; not overdriving, but carrying the lambs in His bosom, and gently leading those that are with young. Mightier than the mightiest, but meeker than the meekest! The Lion of Judah, but the Lamb of Bethlehem! Prince and Savior; Fellow of Jehovah; and yet the smitten Shepherd of the scattered flock!

Nor is this all. It is a human hand that leads the flock. God does His work through the hands of human and fallible agents. You have not recognized Him; but had your eyes been opened, you would have seen His leading in the gentle hand of that mother, in the strong grasp of that friend, in the trembling fingers of that young girl, in the tiny hand of your little babe. Ah, how many good and tender hands have molded and fashioned our lives! — but beneath them all there have been the leadings of the great God, convoying us through deep and dark waters to our fold.

February

February 15

Psalm 78:19

“Yea, they spake against God; they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?”

OH, fatal question! It shut Israel out of the Land of Promise, and it will do as much for you. Israel had seen the wonderful works of God, cleaving the sea, lighting the night, and giving water from rocks. Yet they questioned God’s ability to give bread, and to spread a table in the wilderness. Surely it was a slur on His gracious Providence to suppose that He had begun what He could not complete, and had done so much but could not do all.

But we are in danger of making the same mistake. Though behind us lay the gift of the Cross, the miracles of Resurrection and Ascension, the care exercised by God over our early years, the goodness and mercy of our after lives, we are disposed to say, “Can God?” Can God keep me from yielding to that besetting sin? Can God find me a situation, or provide food for my children? Can God extricate me from this terrible snare in which I am entangled? We look at the difficulties, the many who have succumbed, the surges that are rolling high, the poor devil-possessed child, and we say, If Thou canst do anything, help us!

Nay, nay, there is no If with God; there is no limit to His almightiness but thy unbelief. The words are wrongly placed. Never say again, “Can God?” but God can. Never, If Thou canst; but If I can believe. Never, If Thou canst Thou wilt; but If Thou wilt

Thou canst; and Thou wilt, since Thou hast made and redeemed me, and Thou canst not forsake the work of thine own hands. Argue from all the past to the present and future. Fetch arguments for faith from the days that have gone.

“His love in time past forbids me to think He’ll leave me at last in trouble to sink.”

February 16

Psalm 79:5

“How long, LORD? wilt thou be angry for ever? shall thy jealousy burn like fire?”

TO us, also, as to this longsuffering Jew, God’s dealings seem sometimes interminable. We do not understand why the cloud hangs over us so long, why the pressure of trouble lasts year after year. We cry, “How long, O Lord?” in gusts of impatience; but take care not to hurry God unduly, lest thou force Him to forego doing His best work in thy life.

This parable helped me; may it help you to be silent, still, and longsuffering. A bar of iron, worth £1, when wrought into horseshoes, is worth £2; if made into needles, it is worth £70; if into pen-knife blades, it is worth £650; if into springs for watches, it is worth £50,000. What a drilling the poor bar must undergo to be worth this; but the more it is manipulated, the more it is hammered and passed through the fire, and beaten, and pounded, and polished, the greater its value.

So with the Jews. No other nation has passed through such awful trial and discipline as they have; but no other nation was capable of yielding such wealth of service to mankind, nor

affording such untold service in the highest regions.

So with ourselves. Those that suffer most are capable of yielding most; and it is through pain that God is getting the most out of us for His glory and the blessing of others. It will be all right some day. We shall see it and be satisfied. Yes, great Father, we would like to be watch-springs. Take no heed of our cry if sometimes we forget ourselves and say, How long?

“Then haste Thee, Lord! Come down, Take thy great power and reign!

But frame Thee first a perfect crown Of spirits freed from stain.”

February 17

Psalm 80:3

“Turn us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.”

THREE times we have this cry repeated in this psalm. (Vs 3, 7, 19) Again and again, and each time with some additional thought, the soul pleads for Restoration.

The Master said to Peter: When thou art converted (i.e., turned again) strengthen thy brethren. But Peter did not realize that the Master Himself would need to turn him. He turned his back on his Lord and denied Him; but Jesus turned him back, by that look, that message from his grave mouth, that interview in the garden and on the lake-shore. He turned him face-wards to Himself, and caused his face to shine, and Peter was saved. We can be regenerated only once, but we can be converted many times. The new life is implanted once for all, and it is everlasting,

inextinguishable, and permanent; but those who have been born from above, and are undoubtedly children of God, may, beneath the power of some strong fascination, turn aside, may wander in forbidden paths, may get into such a maze as to be walking in the contrary direction to that on which they started. There may even be times when our desire for God is slackened, our appetite for the Bible is lost, our soul is bound and tied with the cords of sin; at such times, let us bemoan ourselves, our folly and impotence, and cry, “Turn us again, O God,” and we shall be turned; for Thou art the Lord our God. He who at first called us to Himself must call us back: He who regenerated, must renew: He who reconciled us to God by His death, must save us by His life. When most dark, and dead, and estranged, cry with Ephraim: “Turn Thou me, and I shall be turned; for Thou art the Lord my God” (Jeremiah 31:18).

February 18

Psalms 81:7

“Thou calledst in trouble, and I delivered thee; I answered thee in the secret place of thunder: I proved thee at the waters of Meribah. Selah.”

SUCH trouble as Israel passed through in the Exodus comes once in the history of a nation. From the brick-kilns and treasure-cities which they built, God’s people called to Him with strong crying and tears, extorted by insupportable sorrows. Still more did they need to cry for help when they stood between the Egyptians and the waters of the Red Sea. From the beach a nation’s call rose to God. Then was their trouble and heart-travail — a nation in throes of pain! Are you in trouble? Call upon God in the day of trouble; He will answer.

God's answers are often in the secret place of thunder. From His pavilion of cloud God spoke in tones of thunder that pealed over the heavily-breaking surf of the Red Sea. Several of the Psalms allude to the thunderstorm that rolled through the night of the passage through the deep. The march of Israel was to the roll of thunder.

The peals of heaven's artillery struck dismay into the hearts of the alien; but it was as though the Father was speaking to His children, the people with whom He was in covenant.

God's answer to our prayer is often in thunder-tones that hurtle through the air. By terrible things in righteousness He answers us.

When Jesus asked the Father to glorify His name, the quiet reply, "I have ... and will," which He understood, sounded like thunder to the bystanders. Happy the child who in thunder-claps detects the Father's voice, and in mystic characters of flame reads the Father's handwriting! Whilst, at Sinai, the people trembled at the repeated thunder-peals reverberating above them, Moses went into the thunder-covert where God was. There is no fear in love, because perfect love casteth out the fear that hath torment.

February 19

Psalm 82:8

"Arise, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations."

THE judges and magistrates are compared in this psalm to God, because they exercise something of his power in the right ordering of human society. The Bible always inculcates respect and reverence to properly constituted authority, though it never

hesitates to demand of all in authority that they should exercise their high functions impartially. Too often has the high trust been abused, and the psalmist turns with relief to the upright Judge, and comforts himself with the reflection that one day God Himself shall judge the earth, because He shall inherit all the nations.

Christ is the Firstborn and Only Begotten. As such He shall inherit all things. They were made for Him. He is the Heir. He came in His incarnation to claim His inheritance; but His claim was denied. He was cast out of the vineyard and slain; but His claims were not annulled, they remained intact. And during the present age they are being vindicated; and in answer to His appeal He is receiving the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession. One nation after another is becoming His province. The kings of the isles are bringing presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba are offering gifts.

It is great encouragement in missionary work to know that every nation is by right of gift and inheritance our Lord's. He sold His all to purchase it, because His treasure was buried here. It is ours to make it His in fact. It is always easy to work on the line of the Divine purpose. God never purposes outside what is practicable and possible for man to realize. Apprehend the purpose of God, and without hesitation claim its realization.

February 20

Psalm 83:1

“Keep not thou silence, O God: hold not thy peace, and be not still, O God.”

OH that God would break the silence! If He would but say one

word! If we might but hear that voice — deep as the sound of many waters, and tender as the call of love — just to say that He was there; that all which we believed was true; that He was satisfied and pleased; that our perplexities would work out right at last! It is so difficult sometimes to go on living day by day without one authoritative word; and we are prone to rebuke Him for silence, that He is still, that He holds his peace. “Be not Thou silent unto me, lest I be like those that go down into the pit.”

But God has not kept silence. The Word was manifested. In Him the silence of eternity was broken. And if thou and I are still, if our ear is purged, and anointed with the blood and oil, if we make a great silence in our heart, we shall hear Him speak.

“Where is thy haunt, Eternal Voice?

The region of thy choice;

Where, undisturbed by earth, the soul Owns thy entire control.”

’Tis not where torrents are born, nor amid snowcapped peaks, nor in the break of the surf; but in the heart, weaned from itself, isolated in chambers of sickness, cast among strangers, yearning for tender voices that cannot make themselves heard — there God is no longer still. He breaks the silence. “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.” (Isaiah 40;1) “It is I; be not afraid.”

(Matthew 14:27) It is always easy to detect God’s voice, because it is full of Jesus, who is the Word of God, and it is corroborated by Providence; but the heart must be still, and on the listen!

February 21

Psalm 85:10

“Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.”

THIS has been fitly called “the bridal of the earth and sky.”

Mercy is the love that finds its reason in itself, its measure in helplessness and ill-desert. But in God it is always blended with Truth. God must be faithful to His covenant relations, to His Son, to Himself, and to the law which He has instituted. Any display of mercy must be consistent with truth. These are heavenly twins.

Where you meet one you will be sure of the other. Jesus was full of grace and truth. The love He brings is consistent with the highest considerations; and by His death it is so arranged that God acts consistently with His holy law in loving and saving the meanest and weakest believer.

Righteousness has for her twin sister Peace. “And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.” (Isaiah 32:17) The King of Righteousness is after that the King of Peace. If you want peace, you must be right with God; and if you would be right with God, you must come to Jesus and become united to Him, who is made unto us the righteousness of God. At the cross these two kissed. The righteousness of God was satisfied, and the peace of man secured.

What a wondrous cross is that on which the Prince of Glory died! The question was — How could God be just, and yet justify the ungodly? How could He uphold the majesty of the moral law, and yet take sinners to His heart? But the answer came clear and satisfying, when the Maker of man took on Himself our sin and gave justice its due. Now see that perfect blending of the Divine attributes, and that God is “just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” (Romans 3:26) Oh that truth might spring up

as the response and echo of our hearts!

February

February 22

Psalm 86:5

“For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.”

WE are blinded by sin, and cannot believe that God is ready to forgive. We think that we must induce Him to forgive, by tears, promises of amendment, religious observances. There is in every heart such difficulty in understanding the unwearying patience and ever-yearning love of our Heavenly Father. Oh, clasp this word to your heart! Say it over and over again — “Ready to forgive, ready to forgive!” At any moment of the sad history of the prodigal, had he returned, he would have found his old father as ready to forgive as on the day, too long delayed, when he did return.

The only pity was that he had not come long before.

You have fallen a hundred times, and are ashamed to come to God again; it seems too much to expect that He will receive you again. But He will, for He is ready to forgive. You feel that your sin is aggravated, because you knew so much better; but it makes no difference to Him, He is as ready to forgive you now, as when first you came. You are disposed to wait a little, till your sin has become more remote, till passion has subsided, till the inscription has faded from the wall; but you might as well go at once, God is as ready to forgive at this moment as at any future time. You are wounding Him greatly by doubting Him. He is

ready, waiting, eager to forgive.

You have only to call upon Him, and you would discover the plenteousness of His mercy. How ready Jesus ever was to forgive sinners, herein revealing God's heart!

"O Love, Thou deep eternal tide,

How dear are men to Thee!

The Father's heart in opened wide By Jesus blood to me."

February 23

Psalm 87:7

"As well the singers as the players on instruments shall be there: all my springs are in thee."

"ALL my fresh springs," the Prayer-book version has it.

Perennial freshness! This is our portion. We have only to abide in Christ in daily, hourly faith, through the grace of the Holy Spirit, for where that is secured there need be no further effort; naturally, perennially, plentifully, there will arise in us the fountains whose source is God, and the ultimate destination of whose waters are the wildernesses and deserts around.

Do you want freshness in your love? The vintages of other years cannot provide you with the ruddy clusters and the wine of sacrifice required for present day needs. You want new enthusiasm, tenderness, and interest in those around you. Deepen your union with God by faith and prayer. Your fresh springs are in Him; He will Himself be in you a spring of living

water, rising up to everlasting life and love.

Do you want freshness in your views of truth? There are such constant demands made on your teaching powers, that you are sometimes fearful of exhaustion. But if you keep your heart open to God, and your soul perpetually nourished by Scripture, you will find that God's thoughts will come freshly and brightly to you — new as each morning, fresh as spring.

Do you want freshness in your religious life? This, too, is His gift, because the life we live in the flesh is, after all, not our own life, but His. Jesus is in us, the Hope and Fount of the true life. All He wants is to have orifices, channels, openings in the rocky soil, and He will arise in us heavenward and God-ward, as fountains in the sunny air. Rise up in us, Thou Blessed One, who art evermore the resurrection and the life!

February 24

Psalm 88:2,3

“Let my prayer come before thee: incline thine ear unto my cry; For my soul is full of troubles: and my life draweth nigh unto the grave.”

THE psalmist has found the quickest argument before his God. There is nothing that so quickly makes the bell ring in heaven as the touch of a troubled hand. When a man is full of the interests of life, of prosperity, and self-content; when the voices of applause resound on every side; when his house is full of children, and his barn of sheaves, his prayer halts, and God seems far away. But let trouble come — let the waters, swollen by many confluent streams, begin to rise within his soul, so that lover and friend are far away, and he compassed with terror

(Psalm 88:16, 18), then God bends his ear and heart.

O child of sorrow, do not count that you are cast away! It is true that your Lord cried from His Cross, “Why hast Thou forsaken Me?” (Matthew 27:46) but even Him, though laden with the sins of the world, the Father held near His heart. And He has not left you, neither can He.

“The earth and every vassal star, All space beyond the soar of angel wings, Wait on his word; and yet He stays his ear For every sigh a suppliant sinner brings.”

Try and think of trouble as storing your heart with seeds of joy; as acting upon you as the fire upon the primeval earth, scattering jewels through its crust; or as the glaciers that brought the rich soil into the valleys; or as the husbandman who buries the seeds of spring in the autumn fields. A veiled angel, nothing else!

“But if, impatient, thou let slip thy cross, Thou wilt not find it in this world again, Nor in another; here, and here alone, Is given thee to suffer for God’s sake.”

February 25

Psalm 89:32–33

“Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.”

I WAS asked the other day if I believed, as an increasing number were said to do, that each man bears his own sin, and that there is no such thing as the vicarious imputation of the sins of the world to the Lamb of God. I said at once that this idea, so

growingly prevalent, would not avail to help men and women like many of those with whom I come in contact, and are deeply dyed. Tell them that they must bear their own sin, and they turn from you in despair.

This is what conscience has been reading to them hourly from the stony book of the law. The soul dreads to have to bear its sin, and cries out for propitiation and covering. A dying man said recently, "I have been into the valley of death, and where is my covering?"

Men need a covering. It is requisite that help should be laid upon One that is mighty (Psalm 89:19).

We need to distinguish between guilt and secondary consequences of sin. For guilt we must have the transference of the black load of sin to our Savior. But it is also perfectly true that the nervous or physical system of the drunkard will never be what it might have been. The consequences of wrongdoing must be reaped.

God will forgive you, and His lovingkindness will not depart; but He will visit your transgression with the rod, and your iniquity with stripes. But even here His mercy will avail to transform the curse into a blessing, and make myrtles bloom where thistles had flourished. God's love can so transmute these results of sin, that where sin reigned unto death, grace shall reign unto eternal life. But never forget that, when once God has entered into covenant with a soul, He will stand to it, till the heavens be no more.

February 26

Psalm 90:14

“O satisfy us early with thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.”

IT was towards the close of the desert wandering that Moses wrote this sublime psalm, all the imagery of which is borrowed from the wilderness. The watch around the camp-fire at night; the rush of the mountain flood; the grass that sprouts so quickly after the rain, and is as quickly scorched; the sigh of the wearied pilgrim (Psalm 90:9). As the old man looks back on life, he gives it as his experience that the heart which is satisfied with mercy in the morning, never fails to rejoice and be glad all its days.

There is no hour like that of morning prime for fellowship with God. If we would dare to wait before Him for satisfaction then, the filling of that hour would overflow into all other hours. A bright Christian lad, giving his brief testimony for Jesus recently, told his secret when he said that at his conversion he trusted the Lord with his morning hour; and the way he spoke of it indicated the radiancy of the light that shone for him then.

Perhaps the morning of life was rather in Moses' thought. If so, the old man has prepared a prayer in which successive generations of bright children may join. Young ones, do you want a glad and rejoicing life? Do you want to live by the well that will never dry up or freeze? Seek God's mercy in Jesus Christ our Lord, and the day will never dawn when you will regret having made that choice: nay every day will be full of rejoicing gladness. I like that record of the holy Columba, at the end of his saintly life, “Angelic in appearance, graceful in speech, holy in work, beloved by all — for a holy joy ever beaming on his face revealed the joy and gladness with which the Holy Spirit filled his inmost soul.”

February 27

Psalm 91:9

“Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation;”

THE structure of this psalm is often obscured. It begins with the announcement on the part of the chorus of the general truth that to dwell in the inner place of fellowship is to abide under the protection of Divine Power.

Twice the psalmist speaks. In the second verse we hear him saying:— “I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: My God; in him will I trust.”

In the ninth verse he breaks in again:— “Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge.”

And each profession on his part is followed by the outburst of the chorus with an enunciation of all the blessings which most certainly will accrue.

In the last three verses (Psalm 91:14–16) God Himself is introduced, assuring His child of all that He is prepared to do and be. Have you ever said definitely, “O Lord, Thou art my refuge”?

Fleeing from all other, have you sheltered in Him from the windy storm and tempest, from the harrow by day, and pestilence by night, from man and devil? You must avow it. Do not only think it, but say it. Keep saying it because it is true, rather than because you feel it to be true. Not only in the midst of sympathizing friends, but in hours of loneliness, desertion, and opposition.

In a farm, in which I am interested, we have an incubator, the artificial heat of which hatches hundreds of little chickens; but there always seems a great lack in their lives — no mother’s call

or wing.

They invariably remind me of those who have not sheltered under the wing of God.

February 28

Psalm 92:10

“But my horn shalt thou exalt like the horn of an unicorn: I shall be anointed with fresh oil.”

THERE is perennial freshness in God — in the works of nature, in His love, and in the renewal of the soul. Does the eye ever tire of the changeful beauty of the clouds? Though we look out from childhood to old age on the same landscape, there is always something fresh to captivate the roving eye. Think of the unfailing freshness in love — love of woman to man, of mother to child. Think of the freshness of each returning day, of earth in her springtime robe, with the myriads of sweet children, whose laughter is as ringing and their eyes as bright as if the earth were young, instead of being old and weary. And if God can do this for the works of His hands, is there any limit in the freshness which He will communicate to His children?

Each morning bend your heads, ye priests of the Most High, for the fresh anointing for the new ministries that await you. The former grace and strength will not suffice; old texts must be rejuvenated and reminted; old vows must be respoken; the infilling of the Holy Spirit must be as vivid, and may be as definite, as at the first. See to it that you do not rise from your knees till you can say, “I have been, and am, anointed with the fresh oil.” And the anointing that ye receive from Him shall abide on you, teaching you how to abide in Him. So you shall bring

forth fruit in old age, and in life's winter be full of sap and fervor.

Pastor Harms used to say: Pray diligently. I do not mean your common prayer alone; but pray diligently in your room daily for the Holy Spirit. How their faces shine, who receive this daily unguent!

February 29

Psalm 93:3

“The floods have lifted up, O LORD, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves.”

HOW often a man says these words over to himself as he the deck of the steamer in mid-Atlantic! There is no commentary to this psalm like that supplied by the break of the waves. Sometimes the voice of the floods is deafening; you cannot hear yourself speak; at other times all night, through the port-hole, you hear their musical break beneath. The lifted up voice of the sea gives many notes in the great organ of nature, sometimes the deep bass, at other times the silvery treble. One says to one's self— “What are the wild waves saying?”

They may be inciting one another to a work of destruction and devastation, roaring in their rage, fretting for supremacy. Why should they endure the presence of man in their wild waste? He is an intruder. The sea-gulls are welcome; they are at home as in their native element, but man has no right.

So do the waves of trouble roar wildly around the bark of our life. There are times when billowing surge rolls in upon the soul, and breaks with boom and roar; but always there floats upon the soul the refrain of this sublime canticle, “The LORD on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty

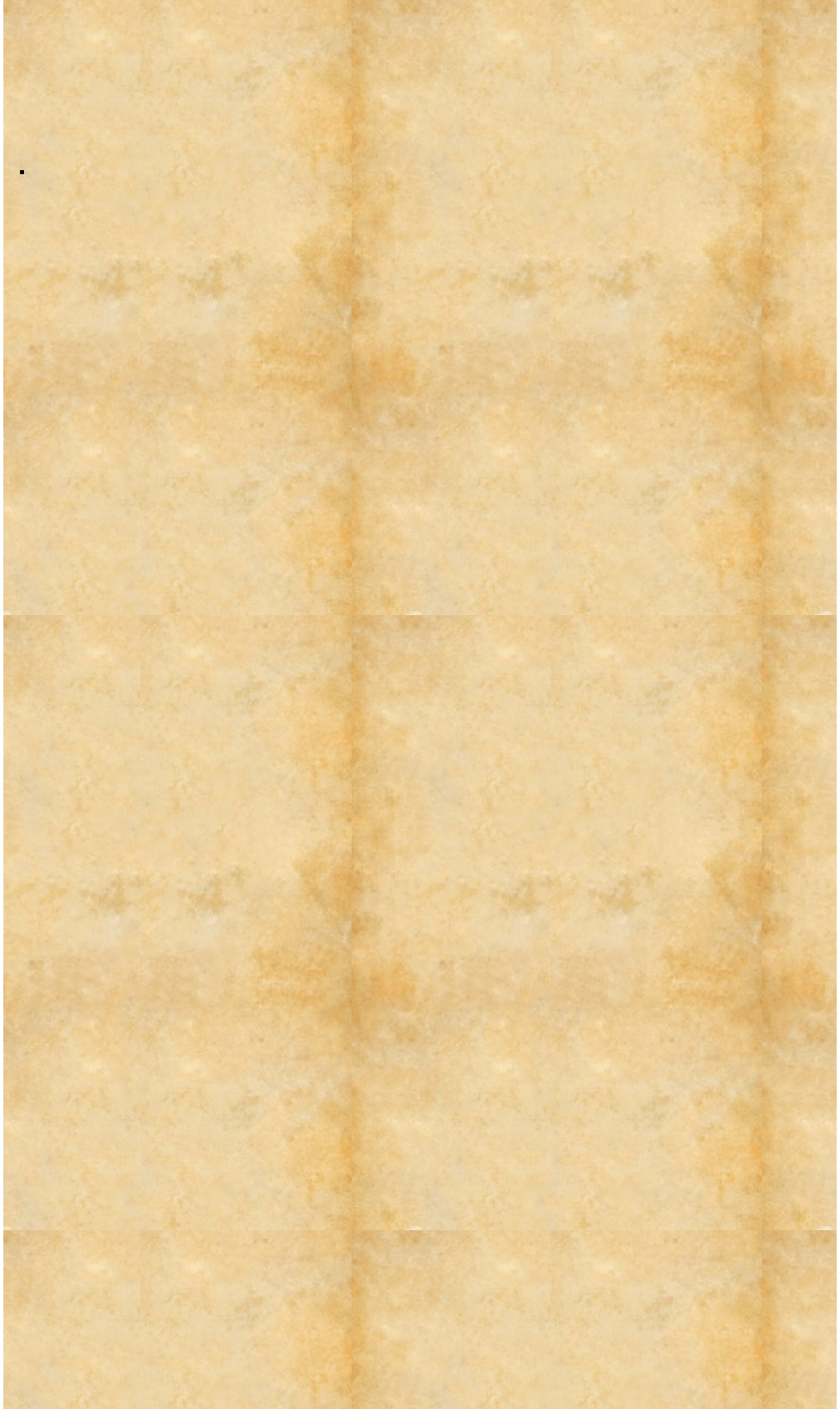
waves of the sea.” (Psalm 93:4) He sits as King, higher than the spray is tossed, deeper than the fathomless depths, mightier than the strongest billow. Let Him but say, “Peace, be still”! (Mark 4:39) and the greatest storm that ever swept the waves with wild fury sinks into the tranquil sleep of childhood. Or, if we sink beneath the wave, we shall but fall into the hollow of God’s hand, where the oceans are cradled.

Our Daily Homily

By

F.B. Meyer

- 1. March 1st through 6th**
- 2. March 7th through 13th**
- 3. March 14th through 20th**
- 4. March 21st through 31st**



March

March 1

Proverbs 1:33

“But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.”

“WHOSO.” This promise is to us all. To the man in the street, as much as for those of us who have been nurtured in Christian homes.

The evil is taken out of things for those whose hearts are full of God. Nothing which God allows to come to us is really evil, except sin. Put away sin from your heart, and let it be filled with Love and Faith, and behold all things will become new. They will lose their evil semblance, because you will look at them with new eyes. Men talk against the March wind; but when they understand that it is cleansing fetid dens of fever-germs, they regard it as a blessing.

Men dread change, anything unwonted or unaccustomed; but when they find that, like the transplanted fruit-tree, they will often attain a greater maturity than when left to one spot of soil, they welcome it. If you look at things apart from God, especially if you anticipate the future without Him, you have good cause for fear; but if you hearken to and obey Him, if you know and love Him, if you abide in God and God in you, you will see that the evil is not in the things or events, but in yourself. Give yourself as alms to God, and lo, all things will become clean to you.

Death shall lose its terrors, and become the Father's servant, ushering you into His presence. Pain and suffering shall but cast into relief the stars of Divine promise. Poverty will have no pangs, and storm no alarms. You shall become so habituated to find the rarest blessings associated with what men often dread most, that you will be quiet from all fear of evil, and able to look out, with serene and untroubled heart, on a sea of troubles. In fact, it is very doubtful if anything is really evil for those who love God.

March 2

Proverbs 2:4–5

“If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.”

THERE is a beautiful illustration of the truth of these words in the life of Justin the Martyr, who died for the Gospel in the second century. As a young man he earnestly sought for truth, specially that which would arm him with self-control. He took up one system of philosophy after another, trying them as a man might explore mine after mine for silver. Finally, he found that every effort was futile.

“All at last did faithless prove, And, late or soon, betrayed my love.”

At length, wandering in despair on the seashore, he met an aged man, a Christian, who spake as none had ever done to his heart, and pointed him to God in Christ. Beneath those words, that afternoon, he understood the fear of the Lord, and found the knowledge of God.

Thomas longed for evidences of the Resurrection, and Christ came to him. The Chamberlain, as he sat in his chariot reading the book of Esaias the Prophet at Isaiah 53, was desirous to know the truth, and Philip was sent to him. To Saul of Tarsus, groping in the midnight, there came fuller revelations than ever Gamaliel gave, through Stephen and Ananias, led by the Spirit of God.

But you must be prepared to sacrifice all. He who seeks diamonds, or pearls, or gold, will leave his native land, and what other men hold dear, and centre his whole attention on his quest.

Not otherwise must it be with those who would understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. They must be willing to count all things but loss, to sell all they have, in order to buy the field with its treasure-trove.

March 3

Proverbs 3:6

“In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”

THY paths! Then, every man’s path is distinct for him, and for no other. The paths may lie side by side, but they are different.

They have converged; they may diverge. When Peter had been told of the rugged nature of the predestined path which was marked out for him in the Providence of God, he turned towards John, his companion and friend, and said to Jesus, “What shall this man do?”

The Lord instantly replied, in effect: “That is a matter in which I

can brook no interference; it is entirely a matter for my choice and will; if I will, that he tarry till I come.” (John 21:21) We need to be divinely directed. — The man who stands above the maze can direct you through all its labyrinth by the readiest path. God who made thee for thy life, and thy life for thee, can direct thee, and He only.

First: Lean not to thine own understanding. — One is apt to pride oneself on one’s far-sighted judgment. We consult our maps and guides and the opinions of fellow-travellers, to find ourselves at fault. We have to learn that our own understanding is not keen enough or wise enough to direct; we must abjure and renounce all dependence on it.

Second: In all thy ways acknowledge Him. — Let thine eye be single; thy one aim to please Him; thy sole motive, His glory. It is marvellous how certainly and delightfully our way opens before us when we no longer look down on it, or around at others, but simply upwards into the face of Christ. “It is a universal law, unalterable as the nature of God, that no created being can be truly holy, useful, or happy, who is knowingly and deliberately out of the Divine fellowship, for a single moment.”

March 4

Proverbs 4:18

“But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”

THIS may be referred to the work of God in the heart. He who commanded light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God. A little glimmering ray at first, God’s light in the soul grows ever

from less to more, revealing Himself and manifesting ourselves, so that we are growingly attracted from the self-life to circle around Him.

But probably it is true also of the graciousness of the believer's life. At first it shows itself in little acts of blessing on children and the poor; but the range of influence is always apt to increase, till what was a glimmer of helpfulness becomes as the sun shining in strength. The Sunday-school teacher becomes the preacher; the visitor among the poor becomes the philanthropist; the witness to the Gospel in the factory is called to witness in the great theatre of the world. See to it that there is a steady obedience to God's least promptings and monitions. Follow on to know the Lord, and to be conformed to His all-wise purpose.

Once again, notice the comparison in its exquisite beauty. Light is so gentle, noiseless, and tender. There is no sound; its voice is not heard. So is the influence of the holy soul. Its life becomes the light of men. As with the angel over the plain of Bethlehem, it sheds a light around those whom it will presently address. Like the Gulf Stream, which changes our climate from northern rigour to the temperate zone, so a holy life gently and irresistibly influences and blesses the world. The world is no worse than it is, not because of the holy words spoken on the Lord's Day, but for the holy lives of obscure saints.

March 5

Proverbs 5:6, 21

“Lest thou shouldest ponder the path of life, her ways are moveable, that thou canst not know them. ... For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings.”

IT is a remarkable expression, “the level path of life”; and there is great comfort in knowing that God is ever before us, leveling our pathway, taking insurmountable obstacles out of the way, so that our feet do not stumble.

It may be that you are facing a great mountain range of difficulty.

Before you, obstacles, apparently insuperable, rear themselves like a giant wall to heaven. When you cross the Jordan there is always a Jericho which appears to bar all further advance, and your heart fails. But you are bidden to believe that there is a level path right through those mighty barriers; a pass, as it is called, in mountainous districts. The walking there is easy and pleasant if only you will let yourself be led to it. God has made it, but you must take it. How we dread the thought of those steep cliffs! It seems as though we could never climb them; but if we would only look at the Lord instead of at the hills, if we would look above the hills to Jehovah, we should be able to rest in sure faith that He will show us the level path of life.

Your path is not level, but full of boulders which have rolled down upon and choked it. But may this not be partly due to your mistakes or sins — to your willfulness and self-dependence? There are sorrows and trials in all lives; but these need not obstruct our progress. The text surely refers to those difficulties which threaten us with their arrest, putting barriers in our way. When Peter reached the iron gate he found it open; when the women reached the sepulchre door they found the stone gone. What an awful indictment against the child of sensual pleasure, “She findeth not the level path of life!”

March 6

Proverbs 6:21

“Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck.”

IF the son addressed here is bidden to thus care for the words of his parents, how much more should we ponder those of God as given us in God’s blessed Book.

When thou walkest, it shall lead thee. — There is a little circle of friends whom I know of who read this book of Proverbs through every month for practical direction on the path of life. A West-countryman said of this collection of wise words, “If any man shall maister the Book of Proverbs, no man shall maister he.”

Take for instance the weighty counsels of the first five verses.

How many lives would have been saved from bitter anguish and disappointment if only they had been ruled by them! Let every young man also ponder the closing verses. Let us all meditate more constantly on the Word of God.

When thou sleepest, it shall watch thee. — The man who meditates on the Word of God by day will not be troubled by evil dreams at night. Whatever unholy spirits may prowl around his bed, they will be restrained from molesting him whose head is pillowed on some holy word of God. And on awakening, the Angel of Revelation will whisper words of encouragement and love.

And when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee. — The heart is accustomed to commune with itself about many things, but when the mind is full of God through His Word, it seems as though the monologue becomes a dialogue. To all our wonderings, fears, questionings, answers come back from the infinite glory in words of Scripture. Some wear amulets about their necks to preserve them; but the Word of God is both a safeguard and

choice treasure.

March

March 7

Proverbs 7:4

“Say unto wisdom, Thou art my sister; and call understanding thy kinswoman:”

THIS wisdom might seem to be too unearthly and ethereal to engage our passionate devotion, unless we remember that she was incarnated in Jesus Christ, who, throughout this book, seems forthshadowed in the majestic conception of wisdom. And who shall deny that the most attractive and lovable traits blended in His matchless character as Son of Man and exalted Redeemer.

With what sensitive purity He bent His face to the ground and wrote on the dust, when her accusers brought to Him a woman taken in the act of sin! With what thoughtfulness He sent word to Peter that He was risen, and provided the meal for His weary and wave-drenched sailor friends on the shores of the lake! With what quick intuition He read Mary’s desire to anoint Him for the burying!

It was this combination of what is sweet in woman and strong in man, which so deeply satisfied men like Bernard, Rutherford, Fénelon, and thousands more, who have been shut out from the delights of human love, but have found in Jesus the complement of their need, the satisfaction of their hunger and thirst. In Him, for them, was restored the vision of the sweet mother of early childhood; of the angel sister who went to be with God; of the early love that was never destined to be realized.

Women find in Jesus strength on which to lean their weakness; and men find in Him the tender; thoughtful sympathy to which they can confidently, entrust themselves. We are born for the infinity and Divine; earthly loves, at their best, are only patterns of things in the heavens. They are priceless; but let us look into them and through them, to behold the unseen and eternal that lie beneath.

March 8

Proverbs 8:22

“The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old.”

THIS wisdom is not an abstract attribute or quality, but a Person.

Whether the ancient writer of these glowing paragraphs realized fully what deep things he was saying when he so depicted her — as one who was brought up with the Father before the world was, as rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth with the children of men — we cannot positively determine; but we at least may lift the curtain, and see here Christ, who is both the Power and the Wisdom of God. Is not His chosen name the Word of God?

There, in that divine Man, in His gentle love, in His deep and weighty words, in His power to give life to them that find Him, we have the highest embodiment of the wisdom of God, which was before all worlds, and yet stoops to each lowly and obedient heart. It is not enough then for us to seek knowledge and get understanding apart from Jesus; but to seek Him diligently and early, as we are bidden in Proverbs 8:17, sure that when we win Him, we shall possess all the wealth of truth and knowledge that

we require for this life and the next. He is the Truth and the Life. Truth apart from Him neither nourishes nor inspires.

Would you know the wisdom of God, then be still in heart, wait before God, quieting all your soul before Him; remember that Jesus is near, waiting, longing to impart Himself. Be not content till you have pressed through the words to the Word, through the Scriptures to Him of whom they testify. His delights are with the sons of men.

Nothing will fill Him with greater joy than that we should hear Him, watching daily at His gates, and waiting at the posts of His doors.

March 9

Proverbs 9:4, 16.

“Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, ... Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: and as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him,”

TWICE over this invitation is given — first by wisdom, and secondly by the foolish woman. To every young life, in its first setting forth, many voices and inducements speak. Wise, grave voices mingle with siren songs. The strait gate into the narrow way stands side by side with the wide gate that leads into the broad way. The counsels of the father’s lips, the tears and prayers of the mother, amid the enticements of sinners, and the blandishments of the world. Here the true Shepherd, there the hireling; here the true Bride, there the apostate Church; here that which condemns the flesh, there that which takes its side.

Life is full of choices. There is no day without them. We are perpetually being reminded of the way in which the Creator introduced lines of division into His earliest work. For it is thus that He proceeds with the work of the new creation within. Repeatedly we hear His voice as He divides the light from the darkness, calling the one Day and the other Night. Would that we ever acted as children of the Light and of the Day, choosing the one and refusing the other! We are always being exercised in this, and our beat life depends on the keenness and quickness with which we refuse the evil and choose the good

Wisdom appeals to conscience. She says nothing at the outset of the sweetness of her service, or the pleasantness of her paths; but bases her appeal on whatsoever things are just, pure, lovely, and of good report. Yet she has rich rewards to those that choose her. Length of days, honour, a heart at leisure from itself, sure satisfaction, the assurance of the favour of God, a sure and certain hope of blessedness for evermore.

March 10

Proverbs 10:17

“He is in the way of life that keepeth instruction: but he that refuseth reproof erreth.” IT is a wise prayer, “Correct me, O Lord, but with judgment.”

Happy is the man whom God correcteth; for whom the Lord loveth He correcteth. Sometimes God corrects us with rebukes, making our beauty to consume away as a moth before the stroke of illness or physical weakness. At other times we are corrected by the faithful rebuke of a friend, or the question of a little child. And yet again, correction comes to us through the sore discipline of having to reap the results of our sins. Some heed

correction; others resist and refuse it. Many get weary of it, and for their sakes it is written, "Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?" (Hebrews 12:9) Do not be weary of God's correction, my chastened friend. He does not expose you to the searching trial for His pleasure; but for your profit, and that you may be a partaker of His holiness. Heed correction. Ask why it has come, and what it is designed to teach.

Set yourself to learn the lesson quickly. Above all, let us heed more carefully God's Holy Word, which is profitable for correction, as well as for teaching, reproof, and instruction. How often might we have been spared the searching correction of trouble if we had allowed our lives to be pruned by God's Word!

Our behavior under correction will show whether we are in the Way of Life or not. If the Life of God be truly within us, we will meekly accept and profit by the correction, from whatever source it comes. Otherwise we will murmur and fret, till the wine becomes vinegar, and the milk sour.

March 11

Proverbs 11:24

"There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty."

THIS scattering is a conception borrowed from the husbandman.

From out of his barns he takes the precious seed, and scatters it broadcast. The child of the city might wonder at his prodigality, little knowing that each of the scattered seeds may live in a

hundred more, and perpetuate itself for successive autumns.

We are bidden to measure our life by its losses rather than by its gains; by the blood poured out, rather than by its storage in the arteries of life; by its sacrifices, rather than its self-preservation; by its gifts, rather than its accumulations. He is the richest man in the esteem of the world who has gotten most; he is richest in the esteem of heaven who has given most.

And it is so ordered that as we give we get. If we miserly hoard the grain, it is eaten by weevils; if we cast it away it returns to us multiplied. Stagnant water is covered with scum; flowing water is fresh and living. He who gives his five barley loaves and two small fishes into the hands of Jesus sees the people fed and gets twelve baskets over. Tell out all you know, and you will have enough for another meal, and yet another. Set no limit to your gifts of money, time, energy; in the act of giving, the whole that you have expended will return to you, and more also. Freely ye have received, freely give; freely give, and freely ye will receive. "But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully." (2 Corinthians 9:6) "Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness; Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God." (2 Corinthians 9:10,11)

March 12

Proverbs 12:13

"The wicked is snared by the transgression of his lips: but the just shall come out of trouble."

IT has been well remarked that God has set many snares in the

very constitution and order of the world for the detection and punishment of evil-doers. Amongst others, is the liar's own tongue. Watch a criminal trial, and you will find abundant illustrations of this in the detection of a false witness, who makes statement after statement, which are not only inconsistent with truth, but with each other. Presently he comes to a point, where he falls into one of his own lies, which he had forgotten, and lies, floundering like a wild beast in a snare. It is impossible for a liar to imitate the severe and inflexible majesty of truth. In his endeavour to appear true, he will fall into a trap of his own setting.

But whilst the wicked goes into a snare, the righteous shall come out of trouble. It is not said that he will always escape it. Our Master clearly foretold that all lives which were molded on the example of His own would pass through similar experiences. For them also the bitter hatred of the world, the title Beelzebub, and at last the cross. "But the just shall come out of trouble." It is not possible that we should be holden by it. We belong to Him who has come out of the great tribulation. Just now we may be following the serried ranks down into the heart of the sea, on either hand the heaped-up billows, and the stars bidden by the pale of thundercloud. But He who led us in will lead us out. On yonder bank we shall stand among the victors. That weary hand shall wave the victor's palm; that tired head shall be crowned with light. Listen to the voices that come from that radiant shore: Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world: and, Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

March 13

Proverbs 13:3

"He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction."

WHAT we say influences others, but it has a reflex influence on ourselves. When we speak unadvisedly and impurely, we sow seeds of ill harvests not in others only, but in ourselves, and the very utterance injures us. When, on the other hand, we refuse to give expression to a wrong or unkind thought, we choke and strangle it.

Will each reader and hearer of these words carefully bear this in mind. If you express what is uncharitable or wrong, you gratify the evil nature that is in you, and you strengthen it. If, on the contrary, you refuse to express it, you strike a death-blow at the cursed thing itself. When you guard your mouth you keep your life, because you weaken that which is gnawing insidiously at the root of your life. If there is fire in a room, be sure not to open door or window; for air is its fuel and food. And if a fire is burning within you, be sure not to give it vent. What goes forth from you defiles you. Would you see good days? Refrain your lips from evil.

Perhaps you find yourself unable to guard your mouth. You are only discovering the truth of those terrible words: "And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. ... But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison." (James 3:6, 8) If man cannot tame it, the Savior can. Cry to Him then, saying, "Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips."

(Psalm 141:3) The fire of God's love will burn out the fire of hell.

Hand the bridle, or rudder, as the apostle James calls it, over to Him.

"Take my lips, and let them be

Filled with messages from Thee.”

March

March 14

Proverbs 14:30

“A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones.”

IF we would have a tranquil heart, we must resolutely put from us the ambition to get name and reputation among men, to exert wider influence for its own sake, and to amass large accumulation of money. Directly we begin to vie with others, to emulate them, or compare our position and influence with theirs; directly we allow strong desires to roam unchecked through our nature; directly we live on the breath of popular applause, we are like those who step from the pier on a rocking boat — all hope of tranquillity is at an end.

“In God’s will,” Dante said, “is our peace.” When the government is on His shoulder, of its increase and of our peace there is no end.

Would you have your peace flow as a river? — then rest in the Lord, be silent unto Him; fret not thyself; turn away from the things that are seen and temporal; set thy face to those that are unseen and eternal. Live in the secret place of the Most High, and hide under the shadow of the Almighty. Say of the Lord that He is thy fortress and high tower. Put God between thyself and everything. Let the one aim of thy life be to please Him, and do the one small piece of work He has entrusted thee with. Look away from all others to Him alone. And learn to look out on others with a tender sympathetic gaze, turning to prayer about

them and all things else that might ruffle and sadden. Let all thy requests be made known unto God, so shall His peace keep heart and mind.

“Draw me to Thee, till far within thy rest, In stillness of thy peace, thy voice I hear— For ever quieted upon thy breast, So loved, so near.”

March 15

Proverbs 15:3

“The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD: but the prayer of the upright is his delight.”

WE too seldom consider the pleasure that the prayer of people gives to God. Often we go to Him with no other thought than to find relief from the pressure of anxiety or sin. We hardly realize that He is looking for our coming because He loves us. Thus nothing delights Him more than the time we consecrate for heartfelt fellowship with Him. Think, O child of God, when next the hour of prayer comes round, that God is waiting for you. Would you cause Him disappointment by curtailing it, and by passing cursorily through a form, when He looks for the fellowship of the soul?

Remember how Jesus said, “For the Father seeketh such to worship Him.” (John 4:23)

The prayer which gives God delight is one which is characterized thus:— (1) It must be an identification with the prayer of the Lord Jesus. In Him alone can the Father take delight, and in us only as far as we are in the Beloved, and He in us. (2) We must come in full assurance of faith, our hearts sprinkled from an evil

conscience, and our lives rid of all known inconsistency and impurity. (3) We must give time for God to speak to us. Rev. Andrew Murray says, “Bow quietly before Him in humble faith and adoration. God is near. God is love, longing to make Himself known.” (4) Lie very low before God. Sink down before Him in the lowest dust of self-abasement, reckoning yourself to be nothing. (5) Present yourself to God that He may fulfil through you His own loving purposes.

In the Book of Revelation, we are bidden to behold the Angel of the Covenant mingling much incense with the prayers of all the saints. That incense is the merit of Jesus, which makes our prayers delightful (Revelation 8:3–5).

March 16

Proverbs 16:3

“Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established.”

THERE are four matters which we are to roll upon God — ourselves, as the Messiah in Psalm 22; our burden; our way; and here our works. The genesis of Christian work is on this wise.

We become conscious of the uprising of a noble purpose. We are not sure at first whether it is of God or not, till we have taken time to subject it to the winnowing fan of His good Spirit. It is always wise to subject it to the fire of His criticism before it takes shape.

Even then, however, all is not done. We must submit our plans before they are executed, our methods by which they are being executed, and the results of the execution, to the infinite wisdom

of our Heavenly Father.

What a comfort it is to roll our works upon God! That servant of God who is carrying the responsibilities of a vast missionary enterprise! That preacher with his church and organizations! That promoter of philanthropic and ameliorative agencies! Let them roll their works upon God, and be content to take the subordinate place of acting as His agents and executors. The heart will be light, and the hands free, if only we can learn the blessed secret of imposing the responsibility and anxiety of our efficiency, finance, and success on Jehovah. Roll thy works, and see that they do not roll back again. Put on the arrest of faith to make them keep their position. Reckon that God takes what you give; and when you have let your works go, be sure to cast yourself after them on His patient carefulness. Remember that He desires to work in us to will and to work of His good pleasure. Do not worry, nor fret, nor be always looking for results. Do your best, and leave the rest to Him, who is our rearward. He will follow up your efforts and establish the work of your hands.

March 17

Proverbs 17:27

“He that hath knowledge spareth his words: and a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit.”

IT is a wise thing to say as little as possible to man, and as much as possible to God. The ultimate test of friendship has always seemed to me to be in the ability of true friends to be silent in each other's presence. In silence we best may open the heart to receive the infillings of the Divine Spirit. When people are always talking to one another, even though they talk about God, they are liable to lose the first fresh sense of God's presence.

Ordinary conversation greatly weakens character. It is like the perpetual running of a tap which inevitably empties the cistern.

It seems to me disastrous when the whole of a summer holiday is spent in contact with friends, however dear, who leave no time for the communing of the soul with itself, nature, and God. We cannot be perpetually in society, speaking to the nearest and dearest, without saying things which will afterwards cause us regret. We shall have spoken too much of ourselves, or too little of Christ, or too much about others; or we shall have allowed the things of the world and sense to bulk too largely. Besides, it is only in silence and thought that our deepest life matures, or the impressions of eternity are realized. If we are always talking, we give no opportunity for the ripening of the soul. Nothing makes the soul more fruitful than to leave it fallow. Who would pick a crop of fruit when first it began to appear on the trees? Live deep. Speak as little as you may. Be slow to speak, and swift to hear.

“Not seldom ceases outward speech awhile, That the inner, isled in calm, may clearer sound.

March 18

Proverbs 18:17

“He that is first in his own cause seemeth just; but his neighbour cometh and searcheth him.”

IT is easy to boast of what we are or are not; but the real question is as to what others think of us. A Christian lady told me that a little time ago she went to a meeting where one after another arose to say how long they had been without sin. When

an opportunity was given, she asked simply if they might be allowed to hear something from those who had lived with the persons that had been so loudly expressing themselves; because she said that she had observed that the opinions of those who shared the same room or home as Christian professors were apt to vary greatly from those of the professors themselves.

It is a grave question for us all — what do our neighbors and associates think of us? Would they credit us with the highest attainments in Christian living? Would they concede the reality and beauty of our characters? After all, may not we be mistaking our ideals for our attainments, and judging ourselves by a lower standard than we apply to others? Might not our wives and sisters, our husbands and brothers, search us! It is so much easier to plead our own cause in a meeting than to stand clear in the searching scrutiny of the home.

And if our neighbors search us, what does God think of us as the fierce light of His eyes scans us and reads our deepest secrets? What should we do were it not for the Blood of Christ? I used to hesitate once to call myself a miserable sinner; but as I know myself better, I begin to feel that it is a reasonable designation. That is what we are by nature, though we have been made by divine grace, children, heirs, joint-heirs with Christ. Job, the righteous man, confessed himself vile when God's light revealed him.

March 19

Proverbs 19:17

“He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.”

WHAT a revolution would be wrought among us if we really believed this! We are glad to lend to our friends in a temporary strait, especially when we know that our money is safe and will come back to us with a substantial increase. To have an I O U is quite sufficient. But in the light of this test we are taught to look on God as the great Borrower. He comes to us, asking that we will lend to Him. In every needy one who deserves our aid the request of the Almighty may be heard asking a loan.

What mistakes we make! We think we keep what we hold and invest well. But we really keep what we give away. The best investments are the heavenly shares and stocks, which are found in the needs and sorrows of the poor. Will you not, my reader, resolve that you will begin to lend to the Lord in the person of those who need your help, whether for their personal necessities or the work in which they are interested? You are called to be a steward of God's free gifts to you. You must be ready, as His almoner, to deal out His wealth. He will pay you for doing it, by giving you your own present maintenance; and one day He will say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:" (Matthew 25:34,35)

Just ponder the magnificence of this promise: "And that which he hath given will he pay him again." God will never be in your debt.

He is exact and punctilious in his repayment. No man ever dared to do his bidding in respect to any case of need, and found himself the poorer. "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom." (Luke 6:38) Was not Ruth's love to Naomi well compensated?

March 20

Proverbs 20:27

“The spirit of man is the candle of the LORD, searching all the inward parts of the belly.”

SEE that row of unlighted candles, standing in silver sockets, chased and wrought with wondrous skill — such are the souls of men by nature, rich in attainments and generous impulses, highly educated, perhaps, apparently fit for high and glorious work, but they have no light. They are a puzzle to themselves and others.

Whilst another, who has none of their powers or advantages, casts a glow on his age, which lingers long after he has gone. He is like a common candle, but lit. The spark from God has ignited his soul.

But remember that while the candle shines with the light of God, it wastes. The slowly-dwindling length shows the amount of the inevitable expenditure. Our Lord said of the Baptist, “He was a burning and a shining light.” (John 5:35) There must be burning before there can be shining; we must suffer in order to serve. It is good to know this, for it gives purpose to pain. “I cried to Thee, O

Lord, and unto the Lord I made supplication. What profit is there in my blood?” (Psalm 30:8,9) What profit! If we only knew that, the pain might be borne proudly and lightly. Oh, never dare to think of blessing men, except at a cost of blood and tears, that may seem to thee as a guttering candle, the wax of which is flowing down in trickling streams, or curling up in rugged contortions!

“Therefore, O Lord, I will not fail nor falter.

**Nay, but I ask it; nay, but I desire— Lay on my lips thine embers
of the altar, Seal with the sting, and furnish with the fire.**

**“Quick in a moment, infinite for ever, Send an arousal better than
I pray; Give me a grace upon the faint endeavour, Souls for my
hire, and Pentecost to-day.”**

March

March 21

Proverbs 21:1

“The king’s heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.”

MADAME Guyon says that there are three classes of souls that may be compared to rivers flowing towards God as their ocean.

- 1. Some move on sluggishly and feebly. These are often discouraged, dwell much in the outer and emotional, and fail to seek God with their whole strength.**
- 2. Some proceed decidedly and rapidly. These have large hearts, and are quick in their responses to God’s Spirit.**
- 3. Some press on in headlong impetuosity.**

This comparison of our hearts to watercourses filled with torrents from the hills is a very beautiful one, and is capable of great expansion.

Watercourses need fresh supplies of water from the hills: and our hearts are in constant need of freshets from the everlasting fountain of God’s nature.

Watercourses must fulfil their ministry in all weathers: and we must continue patiently in faith and well-doing, whatever be our circumstances or emotions. If we fail, the whole land will be

smitten with drought.

Watercourses end in merging their waters with the ocean tides: so God will one day be all in all.

Will you let God lead your heart whither He will? Just as a husbandman will cut watercourses in different directions to conduct the flow of the water, so will you not let God lead your life? You can be a watercourse: He must give the water. Only be content, like the river-bed, to lie deep hidden beneath the waters; not noticed or thanked by those that stoop to drink the refreshing draughts. It is impossible for the water to pass through you without nourishing your own soul.

March 22

Proverbs 22:5

“Thorns and snares are in the way of the froward: he that doth keep his soul shall be far from them.”

THIS is due to the love of God, shown in the constitution of the world. It would have been malignity indeed to have placed us in the world without the warning signal of pain to show us where we are wrong, and to sting us when we go astray. By the pitiful mercy of our Creator, pain is the inevitable consequence of the breach of physical and moral law; thus men are shown that they are on the wrong path, and driven back in repentance and rectitude. The Greek motto said: “Pain is therefore gain.”

You say that there are many who suffer, who are among the holiest and meekest of mankind; and you wonder how it is that those snares have come so plentifully to their share. But you must remember that though an individual may not have broken

the law himself in any special sense, yet he inherits broken law. By virtue of his union with a sinful race he reaps a harvest sown by others'

sins; and by bearing it meekly and lovingly he enters into union with some aspects of the death of Christ, and fills up that which is behind of his sufferings. When wrong is borne sweetly and uncomplainingly, some froward deed that started long before, and had been cursing the world, is for ever arrested and cancelled; as a cannon ball in a bank of sand.

But, in addition, there are some who suffer according to the will of God. Pain, beneath the touch of the Spirit of God, is in the highest degree disciplinary. As the angels watch the result on a soul of God's sharp ordeal of suffering, they say: "The keen sanctity,

Which with its effluence, like a glory, clothed And circled round the Crucified, has seized And scorched, and shriveled it"

March 23

Proverbs 23:17

"Let not thine heart envy sinners: but be thou in the fear of the LORD all the day long."

I ASKED a working man the other day how he fared. His wife, the partner of many years, has died, and there is no one to welcome him on his return from work and prepare for him. His fellow-workmen, younger men, delight in tormenting him and increasing his arduous toils, because they hate his simple godliness.

A physical weakness grows upon him distressingly. But he said

that he was very happy, because he lived in God. All the way along it was Jesus — Jesus when he woke in the morning; Jesus when he went to bed at night; Jesus when he wrote a letter; Jesus when he went to the butcher's shop to buy his little piece of meat for Sunday — said he, "He made the beasts; He must know what is good to eat." And when I asked how he managed to maintain this life, he said, "I always ask Him to rouse me up early enough to have a good time in fellowship with the Master." From the way he spoke, he reminded me of the priest's portion of the shoulder and breast as symbolizing the strength and love of the Lord Jesus.

If we are in the love of God we shall be in His fear; for though perfect love casts out fear that hath torment, it introduces the fear that dares not cause needless pain to the Infinite Lover of souls. We fear to tear open His wounds again, to expose His heart to the spear-thrust, or to miss aught of His gracious pains to make us what He wants us to become.

"If ye keep my commandments," the Master said, "ye shall abide in my love." (John 15:10) To abide in His fear is equivalent to abiding in His love. They are two sides of the same coin. Only they love who fear. The woman feared Solomon's sword, because the babe was her own.

March 24

Proverbs 24:11–12

"If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?"

CHRIST has greatly added to the convicting power of truth.

Before His time men were taught that it was wrong to do wrong; but He taught that it was wrong not to do right. In the Christian church we confess that we have done the things that we ought not to have done — we do this in common with all men that acknowledge the rule of conscience. But we are taught by our Lord, and by such passages as this, to go farther, and confess that we have not done the things that we ought to have done. This is our great and damning crime.

The priest and Levite that did not go to the help of the wounded traveller; the servant who simply did not use the Lord's money; the nations that did not feed, clothe, or visit Him in the persons of the distressed; the virgins who had not oil in their vessels; the trees that did not bear — these Christ held up to shame and everlasting contempt. We cannot ignore the evil around us, and say we are not responsible for it. We cannot shut our eyes and avert our faces from wrongdoing, and tyranny, and oppression. We cannot profess that it is not our business, whosoever else's it may be, without it becoming known to the Searcher of all hearts, who will certainly reckon it against us on the day of account. Not to do is to incur Christ's displeasure.

What a striking illustration is afforded to these words in the Book of Esther! When the young queen was hesitating, Mordecai said very truly: "For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (Esther 4:14)

March 25

Proverbs 25:21–22

“If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: For thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the LORD shall reward thee.”

THE pagan ideal of a manly life was to succeed in doing as much good to your friends, and as much injury to your enemies, as possible. A few exceptions to this rule are recorded; but the wonder at them proves that the sentiments of forgiveness and mercy were foreign to popular morality and public opinion. How different is the teaching of the Bible! And in this have we not an evidence of its Divine authority? Our Lord went further even than this noble maxim; He said, “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;” Matthew 5:44

We are not taught to be entirely indifferent to the moral qualities of actions. The perception of sin and evil is necessary to a holy soul.

And it is not required that we should abjure that holy resentment to wrongdoing, to which the apostle alludes when he says, “Be ye angry, and sin not.” (Ephesian 4;26) We must always resent wrong as wrong, though we must carefully eliminate any vindictive feeling towards the wrongdoer.

Do you think that others have wronged you? Pity them; pray for them; seek them out; show them their fault, humbly and meekly; wash their feet; take the mote out of their eye; seek to restore them in a spirit of meekness, remembering that you may be tempted; heap coals of loving-kindness on their heads; bring them if possible into such a broken and tender frame of mind, that they may seek forgiveness at your hand and God’s. If you cannot act thus with all the emotion you would feel, do it because it is right, and the emotion will inevitably follow. It was

said of Archbishop Leighton, that to do him an injury was to secure his lasting friendship.

March 26

Proverbs 26:20

“Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth.”

HOW simple a parable! Of course it must be so. As soon as a fire has reached the end of the material on which it fed, it expires.

This is true of the fire of slander. As long as there is an ear to receive, and a tongue to pass on, some piece of malicious slander will continue to circulate. But directly it reaches a hearer who will not whisper it forward, in that direction at least its progress is arrested. Why do you not adopt this role, and urge others to do so?

Hear if you must the whisper of the slanderer; but let it stop with you, locked in the secret of your own breast. You may be voted rather uninteresting and stupid by a certain society which thrives in whispered calumnies; but you will save many a heart from being torn and lacerated by unkindness and falsehood.

How graphic that word “whisperer” is! People always tell you to be sure not to tell; it is a way they have, though they do not expect you for a moment to keep the story to yourself. It is the kiss under which they betray. Always tell them that you refuse to be an accomplice in evil. If there is a wrong concerning which you must neither take action nor speak, you had better not defile your ears with it.

This is true of the fire of the Holy Ghost. You must feed it by your loving obedience, your study of the Word of God, your faith and prayer. Yield yourself more entirely to His possession. Let your spirit, soul, and body, your every act and desire, be as fuel to the Spirit of God. Pile up the wood of continual sacrifice and self-surrender, till the Divine fire reaches out its hands toward heaven.

Even though the wood, like Elijah's, be drenched with water, God's fire will conquer!

March 27

Proverbs 27:7

"The full soul loatheth an honeycomb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet."

HONEY was not used in sacrifices made by fire unto the Lord.

Its luscious taste may have made it an emblem of the pleasures of the world. As bees roam from flower to flower, sipping nectar here and there, so does the heart of the worldling roam over the world for satisfaction; settling nowhere for long, but extracting sweets from a variety of attractive sources.

The best way of combating worldliness is by satisfying the heart with something better. The full soul loatheth even the honeycomb.

When the prodigal gets the fatted calf, he has no further hankering after the husks which the swine eat. The girl who gets real jewels throws away her shams; and the child who has become a man has no taste for childish toys that once seemed

all-important. This is the meaning of the old proverb: Love God, and do as you like.

Whenever the spirit of worldliness gets into a congregation, you may be sure that the teaching has been defective, and that souls have not been made to sit at the rich banquet of the Divine providing.

We are reminded of the words which the psalmist applied to the Word of God: “Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.”

(Psalm 19:10) Fill your heart with God and His sacred truth, and the things of the world will lose their charm. Do you know this absorbing love of Jesus? We can at least choose to know it, and present ourselves to the Holy Spirit, that He may shed it abroad in our hearts. Oh to be full! Full of the more abundant life of which the Lord spoke, of the unspeakable joy, of the peace that passeth understanding — in a word, of Jesus, as the chief and best.

Match 28

Proverbs 28:13

“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.”

THERE must be confession before forgiveness. This is clearly taught everywhere in God’s Word. “If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.”

(Luke 17:3,4) But he must turn and say, I repent. This is the clear

condition. You may and must use every method of inducing him to say this; but he must be brought to say it, before it is right to pronounce the gracious formula of absolution. There may be the disposition to forgive, but there cannot be the declaration of forgiveness, until the wrongdoer perceives the wrong and expresses his regret and sorrow.

The prodigal must say to his father, "I have sinned." It is only as we confess our sins, that our merciful High Priest can forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Confession is to take God's side against sin. It is the lifting out of one thing after another from heart and life, and holding them for a moment before God, with the acknowledgment that it is our fault, our grievous fault.

There is only one way in which transgressions can be covered: that of which the psalmist speaks, when he says, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." (Psalm 32:1), because hidden under the propitiation of the blood. In Hood's poem, Eugene Aram sought to cover his sin under the leaves of the forest, and beneath the waters of the river. But in vain. So sinners try to cover their sins in vain. But God hath set forth Christ Jesus to be a propitiation — a word which denotes the mercy-seat — the lid that covered the stone slabs on which the finger of God had written the Law.

March 29

Proverbs 29:18

"Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he."

WHAT a difference it makes to our teaching and preaching where

there is no vision! The people perish for want of seers of those who can say with the apostle, “That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us.” (1 John 1:3) It is not difficult to know whether a poet or painter has a vision. If he has, there is glow and passion in his work. And it is not more difficult to detect in the accent of the speaker on divine things, whether he is speaking at secondhand, or as the result of direct vision.

This vision of God was vouchsafed to Moses and Elijah and the apostle Paul. Concerning the latter God said, he shall be “a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;” (Acts 26:16) This is our only qualification for teaching others; not intellect, nor imagination, nor rhetoric, but to have seen the King and beheld the pattern on the mount. For such a vision, on our part, there must be humility, patience, and faith, a definite withdrawal from the life of sense, and a definite fixedness of gaze on the things that are unseen and eternal. But on God’s part there must be revelation. “It pleased God, ... ” said the apostle, “... to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach Him. ... ” (Galatians 1:15, 16) The apostle said, “I could not see for the glory of that light.”

(Acts 22:11) A party of tourists was divided one dull morning in Switzerland; the majority thought that it was useless to attempt the mountains. A few started, soon got beyond the low-hanging clouds, spent a day in the heights under marvellous skies, and returned at night, radiant, and overflowing with what they had seen. Ah, speaking is easy when one has seen!

March 30

Proverbs 30:8

“Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me:”

GOD knows what you need for the maintenance of physical life and strength. The body is more than meat, and to have given you this is a pledge that He will give you that. The body is the vehicle and organ of the soul; and since God has given such a wonderful instrument into your custody, He is bound as need arises to furnish needful supplies. He could not expect that you should do what He has arranged should be done in your life, without providing for the repair and maintenance of the wonderful machine through which alone your life-plan can be realized. Trust in His faithfulness.

He cannot deny Himself.

But there is other food which is needful. The daily bread of love, of hope, of holy thought and fellowship. There is other hunger than that of the body. But this also will be provided, according as each day requires. If the human fails, the Divine will take its place, and God Himself will become the complement of your need. The Chinese Christians often put on the gravestones of their cemeteries the words, “They shall hunger no more,” in allusion to the idea of the Confucians that children must constantly be sending on supplies to maintain their ancestors. And may we not say, with unwavering certainty, of those who have learnt to be satisfied with God, “They shall hunger no more”? (Revelation 7:16) In God’s granaries there is our share of corn already calculated for and provided. Let us ask for and claim it. We have no wish to have more than our share, or to despoil others. As Jesus said, Give us each day the day’s supply. O happy child of the great Father, His hired servants have enough and to spare; there is plenty for thee!

March 31

Proverbs 31:11

“The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil.”

THIS alphabetical poem to godly womanhood is one of the gems of Old Testament Scriptures. Clearly the Hebrew woman was held in high honour, and had as much freedom of action as she enjoys in Christian countries. Herein the contrast was very marked, as against the women of other Oriental nations. But in the whole delineation there is hardly any trait more beautiful than this — absolute trustworthiness. You can see the pair together: the husband comes in from sitting among the elders, his heart weighted with affairs of state, and he seeks her confidence and advice. He has no fear of her betraying his secrets. He can safely trust her.

This surely is the most sacred joy a woman can have. To be consulted, to be trusted, to share the common toils and responsibilities. Who would not work willingly with her hands, and rise while yet night, and engage in ceaseless toils, if only she had the inspiration that trust brings!

“If then your future life should need A strength my love can only gain

Through suffering — or my heart be freed Only by sorrow from some stain,

Then you shall give, and I will take This Crown of fire for Love’s dear sake.”

Can Christ, in like manner, safely trust us? Can He trust us with His secrets, His interests, His money? Abraham was one whom

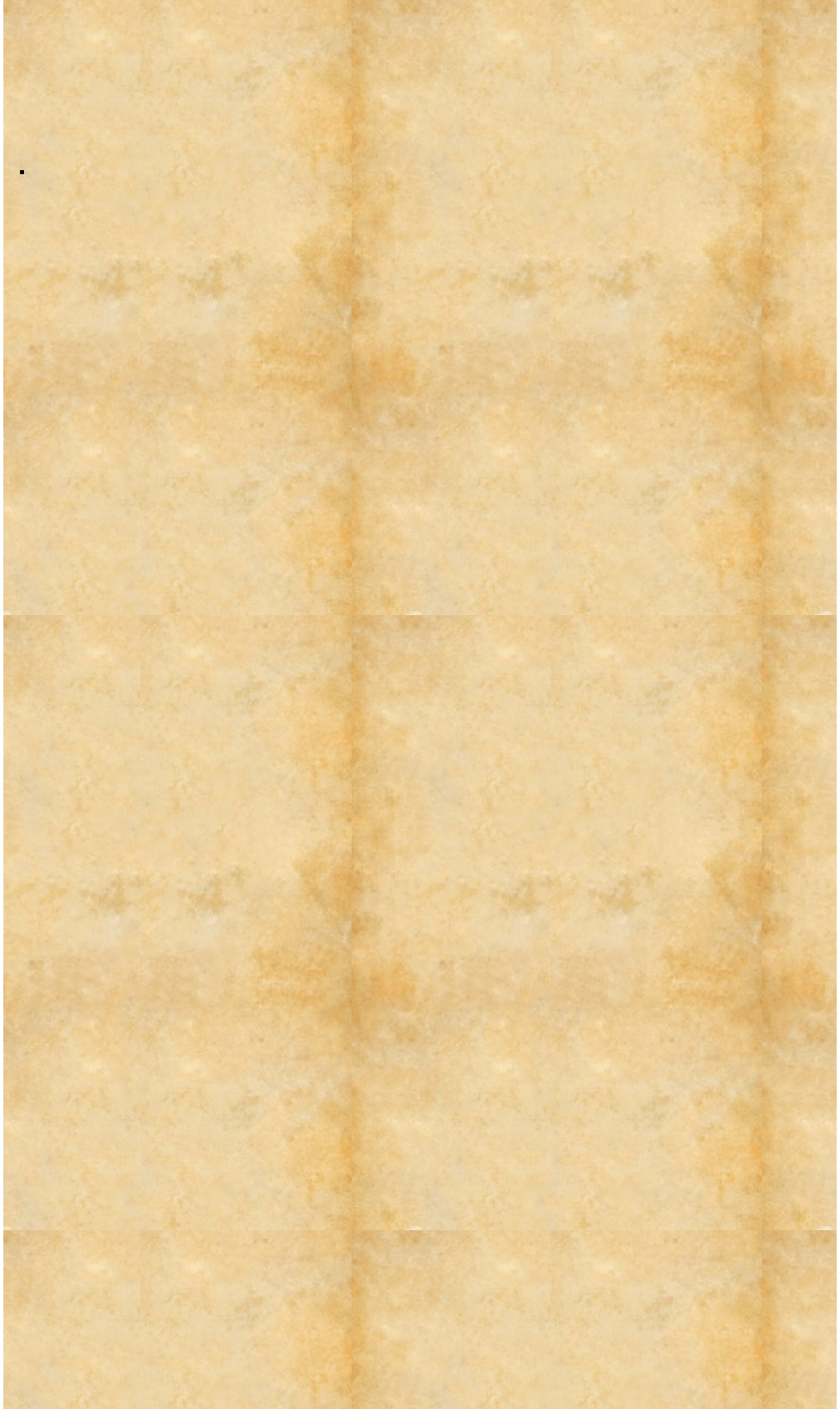
**God could safely trust, and He did trust him as His friend: “Shall I hide from Abraham ... for I have known him?”(Genesis 18:17-19)
It is required of us also that we be absolutely trustworthy.**

Our Daily Homily

By

F.B. Meyer

- 1. April 1st through 10th**
- 2. April 11th through 17th**
- 3. April 18th through 24th**
- 4. April 25th through 30th**



April

April 1

Acts 1:8

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

HOW different this function, entrusted to the apostles, to that assumed by the self-styled priests of our time, who claim the power to repeat the sacrifice of Calvary, and to absolve the penitent from his sins! The Master did not say that His followers were to become sacrificing priests, but witnesses to what He had done and would do.

Looking to Jesus is the condition of witness bearing. How else can we bear witness of Him? As we behold Him we shall reflect Him; and as we reflect Him we shall be changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord (2 Corinthians 3:18). It will not involve strenuous effort to witness to Jesus, if we are living in fellowship with Him. Light is self-revealing. In infinitesimal touches and expressions the light we are catching from Him will gleam forth, and men will unconsciously be led to believe in Him who has made us what we are.

Witness-bearing must spread through successive circles of influence—like the circling wavelets from a stone flung into the midst of a calm mountain lake. Some think they could witness in

the uttermost ends of the earth, but they neglect the Jerusalem of the home. Those who begin here will be led almost unconsciously forward to the Judaea of their relatives, and the Samaria of their near neighbourhood, and so to further boundary.

For witnessing we have supreme power. If ever your testimony is demanded, claim the power for the emergency. It is certainly at hand, and within reach. The hand of faith, the opened heart, may surely receive not a power, an attribute merely, but the Spirit, whose attribute of power certainly accompanies Him. Not It, but He.

April 2

Acts 2:33

“Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.”

WHAT a sublime commencement! As Jacob’s heart revived, and he was assured that Joseph lived when he saw the wagons that his sons had sent, so the heart of the Church revived when the Spirit came. It was the promised sign that the Master had reached the Father’s throne, and was fulfilling the unforgotten promise that He would ask the Father for another Paraclete to fill his place, and abide until He should come again in glory.

It was as though, when the Son ascended on high, leading captivity captive, He passed through all heavens, till He came where no creature had ever come, or could come. There He prayed to the Father, as He had said. It was as though He spoke thus:

“Father, I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do.”

And the Father answered: “Thou art My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Ask of Me, . . . and I will give Thee.”

It was as if He said: “Father, I ask nothing for Myself; for all Thine are Mine, and Mine are Thine. But for others I ask that I may have the power of giving to My own the same anointing and power which Thou gavest Me when I stood on the threshold of My work.

I was then filled with the Spirit; grant unto Me the power to fill the hearts of all who believe with that same Spirit. It was in the power of that Spirit that I wrought, died, and rose; let My Church be quickened and endued with the same sacred power.”

And it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness of the Godhead should dwell, bodily. And the glorified body of Jesus became the reservoir of the Divine fullness, from which we all might receive.

April 3

Acts 3:2

“And a certain man lame from his mother’s womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple;”

IS not this thyself? Thou art of the Israel of God. There is no doubt of thy name being enrolled in the pedigree of elect and regenerate souls; but thou art lame, needing to be carried by the

strong support of a minister and friend; never able to leap, and walk, and praise God; and at the best only able to reach the outer side of the Beautiful Gate that conducts to the richest and gladdest life. Through that gate of entire consecration there come snatches of holy melody; glimpses of white-vestured souls; visions of ideals of life which thou hast not attained: but thou art excluded, condemned to live on the alms of those that enter. How great the pity! Why shouldst thou not have the very best that God can give?

But look up! Expect to receive something; open thine ears to hear and thine heart to receive immediate strength, just where thou lackest it most sorely. The feet and ankle-bones of this helpless cripple only needed strength; they were perfectly formed, but paralyzed. Similarly thine ideals of Christian living are true and accurate, but thou art deficient in power. Thou must receive strength.

But this strength can only be obtained by union with the risen Lord. His name (that is, His nature) alone can make thee strong, and give thee perfect soundness in the presence of those who have hitherto only pitied thy weakness. Believe in Him! All that have ever risen up to obey His lead have had perfect health and strength.

Open thine heart to receive them. Claim and appropriate the power and grace of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of Life which is in Christ Jesus shall make thee free from the law of sin and death, from weakness and failure.

April 4

Acts 4:31

“And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.”

THEY had been filled on the Day of Pentecost, and Peter had been suddenly and mightily infilled for his encounter with the Sanhedrin (Acts 4:8); but here again they were all privileged, whilst in the attitude of prayer and praise, to be once more most blessedly infilled. From this we gather that we may claim repeated fillings of the Holy Spirit.

But let us remember that it is not necessary for the place to be shaken, or for the air to be filled with the outward phenomena of Pentecost as the necessary condition of this heavenly gift. Mr. Fletcher reminds us that the Lord may be pleased to come softly to our help. He may make an end of our corruption by helping us to sink gently to unknown depths of meekness. Like Naaman, we are full of prejudices. We expect that the Pentecostal gift will come to us with as much ado, pomp and bustle, as the Syrian general looked for. But the blessed Paraclete often disconcerts all these preconceived notions. When we are looking for the hurricane, He comes as the zephyr. When we are expecting the torrent to pour into and fill the well, He fills it by single drops.

But the results will always be the same—great boldness in witness-bearing, much liberty in prayer and praise; great grace and beauty of character; self-denying love for those in need; great power through union with the risen Lord. If the second chapter of this book had been lost from the first MS (manuscript). we must still have inferred something like the Pentecost. In no other way could we have accounted for the marvellous change which passed over the followers of Jesus, delivering them from the cowardice, wrangling, and prejudices of former days. Oh for a similar transforming experience for us all!

April 5

Acts 5:4

“Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.”

ACHAN, Belshazzar and Ananias, met the same fate, because of their persistent use of devoted things. When once we have devoted aught to God, He counts it as His own, and strikes down the hand that would abase it to common and profane use. The Lord our God is a jealous God; He will brook no perversion of His rights. Beware that you take back nothing which you have laid on God’s altar, least of all yourself.

Each gathering of believers is endowed with mystic and extraordinary importance, because the Lord, through the Eternal Spirit, is literally present. The true President is not the minister, however distinguished by His gift or grace, but the Divine Spirit Himself; and any sin against the Church is really against Him. It is this Divine presence that invests a gathering of the simplest, humblest believers with such unique importance. It is this which gives them the mysterious binding and loosing power, which is recognized and ratified in heaven. Behind Peter was the real Head of the Church; and so with every faithful minister. Honour the Personality, the Presidency, and Deity of the Holy Spirit, as set forth in this narrative.

Dr. Gordon told me on one occasion that he had in his church a man who, like a very crooked stick, obstructed all its work. He spoke to him alone, and before his brethren; but to no purpose.

Then he bethought himself; and remembered that not himself, nor his church officials, was the true Head of the Church, but Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit. He therefore handed the

whole matter over to the Divine Spirit, as the Executive of the Godhead.

In a fortnight this man had left the city, and necessarily ceased the obstruction in which he had persisted.

April 6

Acts 6:4

“But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.”

IF ever there was a sacred work, it was that of caring for these poor widows; and yet the apostles felt that even such duties might interfere with the continual ministry of intercession. No doubt they always lived in the atmosphere and spirit of prayer, but they rightly felt that this was not enough either for them or their work. So they sought a division of labor, that while some specially served tables and ministered the alms of the church, others might be set free for steadfast continuance in prayer. This would keep the communication with the King on the throne clear and fresh, would draw down the power and blessing of the heavenly world, and be the means of procuring wisdom and strength for their great responsibilities.

There are many courses of usefulness open to each of us in this world, and we must choose the one, not only most suited to our idiosyncrasies, but in which we can best serve our day and generation. It may be that in our incessant activities we are neglecting the one method by which we may contribute most largely to the coming of our Father's kingdom. Notice that word give. It is as though the Spirit of prayer were seeking natures so pure, so devoted, that without hindrance He might form Himself into them. Give yourself to Him for this!

“In that day,” said our Lord, speaking of the Day of Pentecost,

“ye shall ask in My name.” It is only when we are full of the Holy Spirit that we can experience the true power to plead with God, and use the name of Christ so effectively as to receive the richest blessings for ourselves and others. Much prayer, much blessing; little prayer, little blessing; no prayer, no blessing. “The Word of God increased.”

April 7

Acts 7:55

“But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,”

THE blessed characteristic of Stephen lay in his being perpetually full of the Holy Ghost. It is said of others, even Peter, that they were filled, as though they needed some special and overmastering inducement for special service. But Stephen is more than once described as full (Acts 7:6), as though he was always kept brimming, like a lake from the hills.

Those who are full of the Holy Spirit are always looking steadfastly upwards. They look not at the things which are seen, but at those which are not seen. Across the valleys, they catch sight of the Delectable Mountains, rising like the Himalayas above the plains of India. Whilst others look around for help, they lift up their eyes unto the hills from whence cometh their help; and to them heaven stands always open.

Those who are full of the Holy Spirit see and are transfigured by the glory of God. What wonder that those who sat in the Council beheld Stephen's face, as it had been the face of an angel. The light that shone there was not as when Jesus was transfigured—in that case, the light of the Shekinah broke out from within—but here the glory of God shone from the open door of Heaven. So the sunrise smites the highest peaks.

Those who are full of the Holy Ghost see the Lord Jesus, in His glory, as their Priest. It is the special work of the Holy Spirit to direct the gaze to Jesus. Those who are full of the Spirit may hardly be aware of His gracious presence, but they are keenly alive to their Lord's. The Spirit takes the things of Jesus, and reveals them to the loving and obedient; specially those that concern His priestly work on the cross and in heaven.

April 8

Acts 8:26

“And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.”

DESERT means uninhabited. It seemed a strange providence that took Philip thither. He had been chosen to the honorable office of deacon, and there was probably plenty of work to do in connection with the scattered Church. Moreover, he had just completed a most successful mission in Samaria, where the multitude had given heed with one accord to the things he had spoken; but now he was suddenly landed in these lonely solitudes, where only chance travellers could be encountered. Did he not count it strange, and wish to get home to his four little

daughters (Acts 21:9)?

There are many deserts in life! The solitude of a new country, in which you do not know the language. The solitude of a sick-chamber, in which the earnest worker suddenly discovers the limitations of physical weakness. The solitude of suspicion and dislike, which contrast strangely with some large and devoted circle. Thither God brings us not infrequently. No flower can thrive in unbroken light.

But in every solitude, if we wait patiently on the Lord, there are opportunities of service. There is always some inquiring soul in need of the precise help we can give. There is an old story of some monks to whom the Book of Revelation was being read. At the end each was asked to choose the promise he loved best. One said "I will take this, 'God shall wipe away all tears.'" Another chose, "To him that overcometh I will give to sit on My throne." The third replied, "I would choose, 'His servants shall serve Him.'" This latter was Thomas a Kempis, who afterward wrote "The Imitation."

"Not caring how to serve Thee much,

But to please Thee perfectly."

April 9

Acts 9:31

"Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied."

THE church grew not simply by addition, but by multiplication.

Three added to three make six; three multiplied by three, nine.

That is the Pentecostal ratio of increase. These are the conditions of Church growth:—

First, there must be peace: Let us endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. As far as it lies in our power, let each of us live peaceably with all men. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and railing, be put away out of our hearts, with all malice, and let us be kind one to another, tender-hearted, and imitating God the great Peacemaker.

Next, the Church must be edified: We must build ourselves up on our most holy faith. And, indeed, such growth in grace and the knowledge of God is almost inevitable where the Holy Ghost breaks up the reign of apathy and stagnation. When its foundations are deeply laid in righteousness and peace, the City of God arises into the pure air.

Moreover, the members of such a Christian community must walk in the fear of the Lord: To walk means the daily plodding, routine life—full of commonplaces, somewhat prosaic—but always ruled by the fear of grieving the heart that was pierced on Calvary. Lastly, we must walk in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, or, as the words might be rendered, in the paracletism of the Paraclete.

The Holy Spirit is our Advocate, Teacher, Guide; and we should habitually dwell in His radiant and helpful environment. What a difference there is between sea weeds and sea flowers expanding in their rock-surrounded aquariums, and the same when taken into common air! Such is the contrast wrought by the Spirit.

April 10

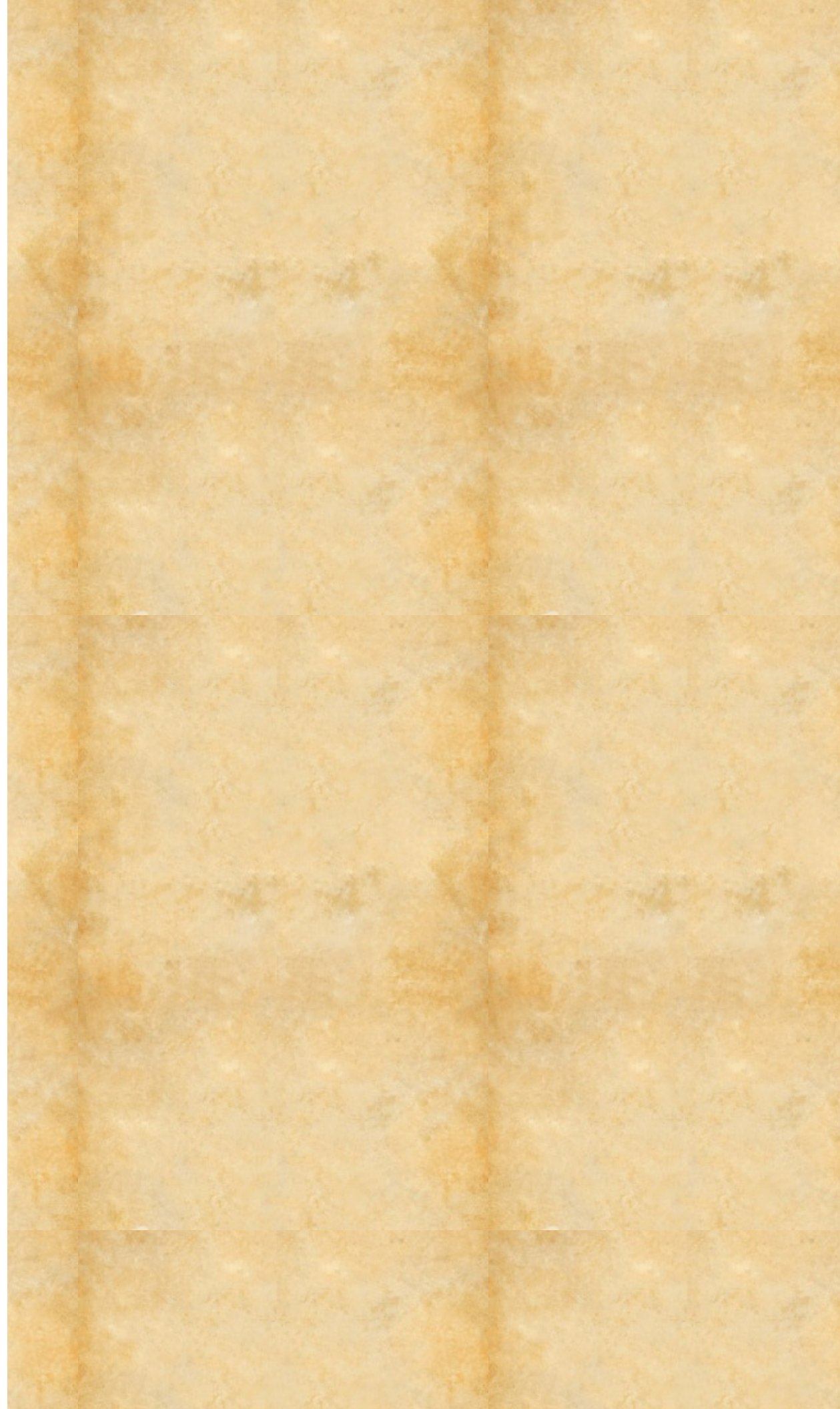
Acts 10:6

“He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.”

THIS lodging must have been somewhat distasteful to the apostle; not only because of its insalubrious odours, but because of the association with death that rendered him liable to the ceremonial pollution which a religious Jew, as Peter was, peculiarly dreaded. Probably he was only driven to it by the sternest necessity. But was it not remarkable that he who had been the chief apostle of the Church, and who had but recently come from a most successful tour, should suddenly be isolated from all his happy and holy associations, and be stranded for many days in the tanner's house (Acts 9:43)?

Yet such dealings on the part of the Lord with His servant are easy of explanation. We are all apt to substitute work for God instead of communion with Him. We become strong in our own strength; elated with success; puffed up by the adulation of our friends. It is needful, therefore, that we be withdrawn from the madding crowd and the career of unbroken prosperity; that the glare of the sun should be tempered, and confidence in ourselves be brought low. There is only one resort. To be hidden in the quiver; to become dependent on the widow-woman of Zarephath; to spend forty years in the desert, till the passionate impulses of our own life subside; to go apart into Arabia; to spend the slowly-moving weeks in the tanner's house.

Whilst Peter waited, he maintained his habits of prayer; left his heart open to the impressions and teachings of the Holy Spirit; awaited the next movements of the cloudy pillar; set himself to acquire lessons which, though subversive of his past experience, reacted on his whole after-life; and from his retirement went forth to unlock a new era.



April

April 11

Acts 11:24

“For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.”

THIS is the Holy Spirit’s verdict on the character and life of Barnabas. Very different from the magniloquent inscriptions on the tombs of warriors and statesmen; but it was better to deserve this from the lips of the Master than to have the longest list of titles ever appended to a mortal’s name. For a good man like this some would even dare to die. The characteristics of this good man were these:

He could see the good in movements outside his own church-order. The Church at Antioch originated, as this paragraph proves, from the preaching of a number of unknown, unordained refugees, who were fleeing from the iron hand of persecution. All we know of them is that they were men of Cyprus and Cyrene. They had broken through the barrier of the ages by preaching to the Gentiles, great numbers of whom had been saved. The Church in Jerusalem was somewhat suspicious of this new departure, and sent Barnabas to report; but when he came he was forthwith convinced of its genuineness, saw the evidence of the hand of the Lord, and was glad. No jealousy, nor narrow bigotry, nor suspicion, warped his judgment.

He was willing that another should share with himself the joys of harvest. He went off to Tarsus to seek his old acquaintance, and

perhaps fellow-student, Paul, and for a whole year the two wrought side by side in loving fellowship, and taught much people.

He was eager that people should be added to the Lord. Too often good men seek a following for themselves, and rejoice in those who are added to their church or organization. This is not the noblest style of work. It is far better to imitate the Baptist, who was content to be the Bridegroom's friend.

April 12

Acts 12:10

“When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him.”

THERE are iron gates before most of us. We are not especially anxious about the first or second ward, but ah, that iron gate!

The iron gate of supreme difficulty; of a parent's prohibition against entering the mission-field; of some obstinate circumstance which seems to forbid the execution of our plans; of some barred and locked prohibition; of death at the end of all. It may be that in his strange bewilderment, between waking and sleeping, Peter anticipated this iron gate with a good deal of dread. That at least would bar his progress; but lo, it opened on its own accord! So shall it be with many of the evils that we anticipate.

Not before we come to them, but at the moment of reaching them; when heart and flesh threaten to fail—in the dim light we shall find them standing open, set back for us to pass. The tram-

line is not cleared from end to end before the tram starts. Were the driver to wait for this, he would never start at all. But as he comes to each van, or drag, or carriage, it moves, and allows him a free course; or, if it seems dilatory, his whistle hastens it. Thus, when we arise to follow the angel of God's purpose, who has suddenly entered the dark cell of our life, we shall discover that apparently insuperable difficulties, which we have long dreaded, shall open to us, and allow us to pass, when we come to the object we have dreaded most, we shall find it gone.

Let there be plenty of prayer, "prayer without ceasing." Let there be prompt obedience to the angel's touch and summons; the willingness to gird the relaxed loins, and follow; and as you go through life, you will find yourself escorted by an invisible Companion, who holds the key to all doors.

April 13

Acts 13:2

"As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them."

THE Holy Spirit, as the representative of the ascended Lord, is supreme in the Church. It is His sovereign voice that summons His chosen workers to undertake missionary or home enterprise. Dr. Ryland, who at first opposed Carey's idea of going to India, said afterward, "I believe God Himself infused into the mind of Carey that solicitude for the salvation of the heathen which cannot be fairly traced to any other source." And the same is true of all missionaries. The true call is always of the Divine Spirit. Whom He wills to call, He calls. Whom He calls, He separates. Whom He separates, He endows and sends forth.

But, Divine and absolute though the selection is, the Spirit seeks the concurrence of the Church. It was in answer to the Church's prayer for direction that the Spirit designated Barnabas and Paul for the great work of world-evangelization; and it was when the Church had fasted and prayed, and had offered these two to God as their wave offering, that they were sent forth by the Holy Ghost.

Thus the Spirit and the Bride cooperate.

In determining whether you have been called by the Holy Spirit to be a missionary, you must certainly call on the advice of Christian friends, and specially of the church with which you worship. If the Spirit of God is in you and them, they will ratify the movements of your heart. It is right, too, to consider whether you have been specially gifted and qualified for the work. In this also, the advice of the Church is most valuable. Of course, the Church herself must fast, i.e., be separate from known evil and indulgence, that she may hear God's voice, and be able to advise her children.

April 14

Acts 14:3

"Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of his grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands."

THERE is no source of encouragement more fruitful of help than the co-witness and co-working of the Holy Spirit. Those who are filled with the Spirit are called into communion, i.e., partnership, with Him in His work. Whilst they work from the outside, He works from within; whilst they sow the seed, He waters it abundantly. We must be very careful to be such in character and

teaching that He may cooperate with us. Our hands must be very clean, if He, with an infinite condescension, is to grant signs and wonders to be wrought by them. But when we work with Him, and He with us, the results are beyond measure astonishing, and His alone.

“We are now seven years in this land,” wrote one of Gossner’s missionaries from the land of the Kohls in India; “but through these long years it was but trial of our patience and endurance....

Everything seemed to be in vain, and many said the mission was useless. Then the Lord Himself kindled a fire before our eyes; and it seized not only single souls, but spread from village to village; and from every side the question was borne to us, What shall we do? How shall we be saved? And I thought it was no more a heathen land I was in, but a Christian, and at home.”

Deus habet horas et moras, says the old proverb. God has His seasons and delays. We do not at once see the result of our sowings, toils, and tears; but we are conscious that our work is with our God—we know that we have our petitions, and we rejoice in hope. We must go on uttering “the word of His grace”—the grace that chooses such rebels to be His children; that cleanses them from sin; that restores and keeps and sanctifies.

April 15

Acts 15:4-12

“And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them. ... And when there had been much disputing,

Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as he did unto us; ... ”

THERE is a difference between these two assertions. They are in exquisite harmony, but each contributes a different note. In the first we have the cooperation of the Holy Spirit with every faithful worker whom He sends forth; so that, while the servant speaks to the outward ear, the Lord simultaneously addresses the heart. In the second, we have the work of the Holy Spirit wrought through a yielded life which has become His pure channel and mouth-piece. This is His two-fold ministry.

His witness with us: As we speak of Jesus crucified, risen, ascended, the blessed Spirit convicts men of sin, righteousness, and judgment. To every faithful word of testimony there is a deep resonant affirmation from this hidden but mighty Cooperant. If we say, “Behold the Lamb of God!” He adds, “He takes away the sin of the world.” If we say, “He died in weakness,” the Spirit adds, “He was raised in power.” If we say, “Repent and believe the Gospel,” He adds, “Now is the accepted time. The Holy Ghost saith Today.” If the Bride says Come, the Spirit joins His voice to hers.

His witness through us: “The word which ye hear,” said our Lord, “is not Mine, but the Father’s who sent Me.” And that which was His glory may be ours also. We speak not of ourselves. This is the secret of a fruitful life—to be the yielded channel; the cleansed vessel; the bugle at the castle gate on which the King may sound His summons; the lute on whose strings the Divine hand may play. Oh, be sure that the most lasting work in this world is only possible when we can say with Paul that we will not boast of anything save what Christ has wrought through us to make men obedient to the Gospel.

April 16

Acts 16:14-27

“And a certain woman named Lydia, ... which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. ... And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: ... And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one’s bands were loosed. And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled.”

THERE are typical cases, put here in juxtaposition for the teaching and comfort of believers in every age. Each of them needed Christ, and each was brought into His true light; but each came in a different way. Lydia’s heart opened as a flower beneath the touch of the sun, so gradually and imperceptibly that it was impossible to say the precise moment of her new life. The jailer came to Christ suddenly, startlingly, amid the crash of an earthquake. The one was drawn by love; the other driven by fear. A distinguished missionary says, “The Lord awakened me with a kiss”—it was so that Lydia’s heart was won. Another tells us that the Lord sprang on him like a lion—it was thus with the jailer.

Lydia: Do not always be looking out for signs and manifestations; for marked experiences. We do not notice the lines of longitude and latitude as we cross the ocean of life. Without knowing it, your character may be in the process of transfiguration. By insensible gradations the work of God may be proceeding in your heart. The tide is rising daily by tiny wavelets that appear to recede as fast as they advance. Do not measure

progress by experience; only be yielded to God, and let Him do His will.

The Jailer: Do not undervalue the influence of fear. There are some natures that never will be awakened unless they are startled by being brought face to face with the consequences of sin. If men will not come by the highest motives, be thankful that they come by any.

Remember it is not belief about Christ, about His death or resurrection, but trust in Him as a living Person, that saves from the power and penalty of sin. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ." He is a living Person. Trust Him now.

April 17

Acts 17:3

"Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ."

THIS is what our Lord was constantly insisting upon during the closing days of His earthly ministry. "Behoved it not," He asked, "the Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into His glory?" The Jewish nation rejected Him because His conception of Messianic power was so foreign to theirs; but in doing so, doomed themselves to rejection from the purposes of God, at least during the present dispensation.

It behoved Him, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest. How could He have sympathized with the anguish of human hearts, if He had not drunk deeply of the cup of sorrow? How could He have led His flock through the thorny brake, if He had not gone to and fro with His bare feet? In that He hath

suffered, He is able to succour.

It behoved Him, that He might be the sacrifice for sin. The conscience demands that forgiveness should be consistent with righteousness. It was necessary, therefore, if Jesus was to bring us forgiveness, that He should be prepared to make reparation and atonement for sin. He must shed His blood, that He may cleanse His people from their sins: He must be willing to be their scapegoat; He must offer Himself without spot to God, that He may cleanse our consciences from dead works to serve the living God.

It behoved Him, that He might reign forevermore. It is a fundamental principle in God's universe, that suffering, humbly and resignedly borne, leads to royalty and reigning. He who can stoop most profoundly can rise to reign most gloriously. As is the descent, so is the ascent. In proportion to the submission to take the form of a servant is the exaltation to the right hand of power.

April

April 18

Acts 18:2

“And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them.”

IT is a striking spectacle to see Paul, on his entrance to Corinth, with which his name was to be so remarkably associated, looking around, probably in the Jewish quarter, for manual employment, that he might be sure of his bread. Similarity of craft introduced him to Aquila and his wife Priscilla, who had been recently expelled from Rome by the imperial edict. At this time they were in unbelief, but were apparently converted by the words the apostle addressed to them as they sat together over their daily toil.

How eager Paul was, not only to preach the Gospel to the crowds that thronged the gay and sunny streets of Corinth, but to win individual souls for his Master's kingdom. Some are eager enough in this holy quest, when they occupy the pulpit, and are conscious of many eyes being fixed upon them; but they are careless of the individual souls cast in their way. Not so was it with the Master, who went out of His way to find one Samaritan woman, and stopped beneath the tree to call down one publican.

Not so was it with Philip, who spoke to the eunuch as eagerly as to Samaria. Not so was it with the apostle, who was as intense in

his endeavours for a jailer, a Lydia, a Timothy, as for the crowds that were going to destruction.

Is not this God's secret test? If we are not careful about the ones and twos, He will not use us to the crowds. Indeed, it is the experience we obtain in dealing with individuals that equips us for multitudes. The way in which the kingdom of God comes ordinarily is, "One by one." How much might be done if each Christian workman would seek to win his neighbor!

April 19

Acts 19:2

"He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost."

THIS was Paul's first question to these twelve disciples. He knew perfectly well that they could not have believed without the special grace of the Holy Spirit; but now he asked if at the moment of regeneration and conversion they received Him.

Obviously, his question implied his belief that there was a special enduement of the Spirit of God for a consecrated and useful life over and above His initial work on the soul.

It is a question which is in these words addressed to every Christian reader. You have believed in Christ through the ministry of the Spirit; but did you at that or any subsequent moment receive the infilling and unction of the Pentecostal Spirit? You may not be able to point to some marked manifestation; but are you conscious of those fruits which are the invariable accompaniments of that supreme gift? If not, learn to receive, and receive them now.

In how many instances might this inquiry be met by the reply which the apostle received: “Nay, we did not so much as hear whether the Holy Ghost was given.” John the Baptist clearly foretold that Christ would baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire; but in his days Pentecost was still more than three years away, and these, His disciples, had never heard that the last days foretold by God had already been inaugurated. Alas that it should be possible after these centuries for many Christian people to be in ignorance of the special glory and characteristic of this age, and be content to live without seeking for themselves all that Pentecost means! Ephesus was moved in every avenue of her corporate life, and the worship of Diana imperilled—and all because twelve men received the fullness of the Spirit.

April 20

Acts 20:28

“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.”

THERE are many lessons in this verse.

(1) The Christian worker must not neglect his own soul. He must take heed to himself, as well as to the flock. Our temptation is to neglect our close walk with God in our eagerness to save others.

(2) The overseer, elder, or bishop, is not set over the flock, but is in it. Note the force of the Greek: the flock in the which they are made bishops. So to the end of life the most eminent of God’s servants must remember that he is but a saved sinner, needing the blood and righteousness of Christ as much as the weakest of his flock; and he also must lie down in green pastures, and be

led beside still waters.

(3) The office of the minister is given by the Holy Ghost. It is He who lays on him the burden of souls, and equips him for his work. He, too, is willing to direct and use. How awful and solemn the responsibility! Woe be to us if we exercise our ministry only for the eye and ear of our fellow-men!

(4) Notice that the Church is distinctly asserted to be God's.

"Feed the Church of God." We are His people and the sheep of His pasture. His by choice, by purchase, by the drawing of the Holy Ghost. We must get a right understanding of this doctrine of the Church, that she had been taken out of the world to be God's peculiar possession and delight.

(5) The purchase money of the Church is here said to be God's own blood. It is a remarkable expression. It stands alone in the Word of God, but brings out very distinctly the thought that the entire Godhead achieved man's redemption in the offering of the Cross. We are dear to God, and must give Him the benefit of His great expenditure!

April 21

Acts 21:5

"And when we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way; and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed."

IT is thus that Christians say farewell. On their knees, within sound of the breaking wavelets, men, women, and children, gathered in a weeping circle around the servant of God, who had

been to so many of them the apostle of a new life. There is no attitude more befitting than this, at times when the heart-strings are strained to cracking, and it seems as though the sacrifice were too great for trembling hands to place on the altar of God.

But it is thus that Christians never say farewell. The relationship which is founded in the love of God cannot be broken. Of such friendship there is no past or future, but always a blessed present tense. What has been, is, and will be. And as severed hearts meet in prayer, though the bodies may be divided by hundreds of miles of sea and land, there is no separation. They are one in the Father's presence, eternally, indissolubly, and blessedly one.

When we are called to part from those whom we love better than ourselves, let us kneel down and pray; let us abide alike in the attitude and exercise of unceasing intercession; let us realize that space and time are mere accidents of being, and not essential; let us be sure that they who are near the King must be near to all who, in heaven or on earth, are nearest Him also. For such there is "no more sea."

It is easier, for the most part, to go on board ship, than to turn home again. There are the interest and excitement of new scenes and people to divert the traveller. But how grey is the common landscape from which the light of the dear presence is withdrawn!

God alone can comfort the bereaved.

April 22

Acts 22:14

"And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou

shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth.”

THE will of God is general and particular. We may know it generally from the book of creation, the Ten Commandments, the beatitudes, and the conscience. But, in addition to this, God has a particular will for each of His children. The moon shines on the sea, but there is a special path of moonbeams to the spot where you stand, where you should be born, live, and die; what you should accomplish by your life; with what souls you should be brought into contact.

God comes still, as He did to Paul, with a great summons, calling His own from the midst of their fellows, and entrusting to them the sacred prerogative of knowing, seeing, and hearing. Happy are they who are prepared to arise at once, leave all, and follow. To them it will be given, as to Paul, to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, so as to unfold them to others.

You have been appointed to know His will—be sure of this; and if as yet it is not clearly made known, adopt these precautions: (1) Carefully remove all your preconceptions and prejudices, so that your mind and heart can be a tablet for God to write on.

(2) Set aside much time for waiting on God, in the study of His Holy Word.

(3) Let the glory of Jesus be the supreme consideration with you.

(4) Do not run to and fro, asking your friends and companions what they would recommend.

(5) Wait for the Lord’s timing, do not dare to act unless you are sure that you are in the line of His purpose.

(6) Mark the trend of His providence, for it will certainly corroborate His inner voice.

(7) When you have once made up your mind in faith and prayer, dare to act, and never look back. He will not let you be ashamed.

April 23

Acts 23:1

“And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.”

CONSCIENCE is what one knows with oneself. That at least is an exact translation of this Latin word. It is a man coming to himself, facing himself, looking deep into his own eyes as he stands before the mirror of God's truth. There are varieties of conscience—the weak conscience, which is ever questioning; the defiled conscience, which has a consciousness of neglected duty or unforgiven sin; the morbid conscience, which is perpetually discussing infinitesimal niceties, and splitting hairs. In contrast with these is the good conscience, of which the apostle speaks.

We have to live with our conscience, and if it is disquieted and restless, we find that it will make life almost unbearable. Like the restless sea, it frets and foams through the dark hours; and is always casting up the bitter memories and sad regrets of bygone days. As it was with King Ahab, so it is with all who have sinned against conscience, they get the vineyard of Naboth; but with it they get Elijah, standing like an incarnate conscience at the door, and taking pleasure and enjoyment from their possession.

Paul could not have made this statement unless he had been very accurate and careful in his daily walk and conversation; but he tells us that he perpetually exercised himself to have a

conscience void of offence toward God and man. Let us subject ourselves to a similar discipline, and often expose ourselves to the searching scrutiny of the Holy Spirit, so that we may say with the apostle,

“My conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost” (Acts 24:16; Rom 9:1).

It is a marvellous experience to stand before God; but how much more so to live before Him!

April 24

Acts 24:14

“But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets.”

FOR want of a better term by which to set forth Christianity—whether by friend or foe is immaterial—the new principle which it represented was called the Way.

Saul “desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.” (9:2). At Ephesus some were “hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that Way before the multitude,” (19:9). “And the same time there arose no small stir about that Way” (19:23). “Felix heard these things, having more perfect knowledge of that Way” (24:22). “And I persecuted this Way unto the death” (22:4).

It is a beautiful and significant phrase. Christ is Himself the Way. He has opened the way to God. Through the heavens He passed in His ascension, leaving behind Him at every step a way by

which we may travel till every one of us appears in Zion before God. In Christ we have found the way to the Father, and have learned a rule of life. The word Methodist is closely akin to this.

The followers of Wesley have been obeying on a new method which their illustrious founder opened.

“Men of the Way”; such is the designation by which Christians should be known. They are pilgrims and strangers, wayfarers, having no abiding city, but always passing on. We may say of them as the psalmist did of the pilgrim hosts that went up yearly to worship at the feast, “Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in whose heart are the Ways of them.” (Psalm 84:5). And is not this the Way that Isaiah spoke of when he said, “an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness” (Isaiah 35:8-10)?

April

April 25

Acts 25:19

“But had certain questions against him of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.”

FESTUS talked lightly enough about Jesus. It was only a question in his mind of some Jewish superstition hardly worth debating. What did it matter to him or his imperial master whether Jesus were alive or dead? And was it not a fact that He was dead, crucified under Pontius Pilate? How little Festus realized the importance of that death, not to the Jews alone, but to himself!

How little he understood that his own continued life was due to that death of which he spoke so lightly! Generations of luxury and years of self-indulgence had blunted his perception: as for all religious questions—they were mere superstition! And with respect to religious enthusiasm, as it appeared in Paul, he could find in his own history nothing that could account for or explain it.

Contrast with this sated worldling—a flatterer, an office-seeker, prepared to sell his soul for gold, the noble apostle whose character stands out in unsullied light. Though Christ had died, according to the Scriptures, he knew that He had risen, and was alive forevermore. His faith did not go back to the cross, but rose

perpetually to the throne. He who was dead, was living forevermore; sharing His servant's sorrows, and supplying hourly grace for his every need.

He affirmed that He was alive. On the abundant testimony of those who had spoken with Him after His resurrection; on the strength of his own vision when Jesus had laid an arrest on him by Damascus; because of the mighty works that emanated from his hand; because of the daily fellowship which brought him into the presence of his Lord, in spite of clanking chain and iron bar—he affirmed that Jesus was alive.

April 26

Acts 26:19

“Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision:”

TO us, also, the heavenly visions come. On our summer holidays, rising between us and some soaring Alp, or meeting us in our walk beside the gently-breaking sea; on beds of pain and in chambers of watching; visions of the risen Lord; visions of His infinite grief and pain which we have caused; visions of the possibilities of our life as a minister and witness of the things which we have seen; visions of results far down the vista wherein dark souls should become light, slaves emancipated, the defiled saintly. Ah, visions of God! ye leave an indelible impression that moulds and ennobles all after-years! Pitiably the soul to which visions of a holier, sweeter life never come, or, if they come, are never seen.

The one important matter is our treatment of them. We may indolently refuse to follow the beckoning hand and obey the voice that calls. We may return to our evil courses and follow the

devices and desires of our own hearts. We may cling to the prison cell, instead of following the angel that strikes us on our side, and bids us go forth into freedom. And if so, like Balaam, we shall become spiritually blind, and fail to see visions that the dumb creatures recognize, and that would fain arrest us in our perilous career.

On the other hand, if we will obey the vision, we shall not only retain the impression, and feel its prolonged and enthralling power, but shall receive still further manifestations of the will of God. "A witness both of the things wherein thou hast seen Me, and of the things wherein I will appear unto thee." To those who love and obey Him, He is ever drawing near with fresh and deeper thoughts of the Father.

April 27

Acts 27:23-24

"For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee."

YES, the angels of God can find their way through the murkiest air, and alight on the most weather-beaten vessel that ever ploughed its difficult way through the stormy seas. Wheresoever thou art, O child of God, God's angels have their eyes fixed lovingly on thee; and in a moment, if it were God's will to give thee eyes, thou wouldest behold them.

"How oft do they their silver bowers leave, To come to succour us that succour want!

How oft do they with golden pinions cleave The flitting skies, like

flying pursuivant, Against foul fiends to aid us militant!

They for us fight, they watch and duly ward, And their bright squadrons round about us plant!

And all for love, and nothing for reward: Oh, why should Heavenly God to men have such regard?"

But if, like Paul, we would have the angel ministry, with their assurances against fear, like him we must be able to comply with two conditions—of being owned and being loyal.

Whose I am: We are His by creation, by purchase, by consecration. That sentiment of being owned, which in the case of slaves is inimical to the highest development, is the elementary condition of our truest growth and well-being. We belong to One who is infinitely worthy. We cannot do as we would with ourselves.

We may not take our own course.

Whom I serve: The word rendered serve is the deepest and most expressive term that Paul could employ of the prostration of the soul at the feet of God. It is employed of the glorified, who serve Him day and night in His temple, and of whom it is said that His servants shall do Him service. The heavenly life begins here; and following its course, angels minister to us, and the stars in their courses fight for us.

April 28

Acts 28:30

"And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him,"

THUS, abruptly, does this fifth Gospel close. It has been well said that a close so abrupt suggests a continuance and a sequel. The curtain of silence falls when Paul's life is not brought to a close, and his work at Rome is still in process; and does not this indicate the design of the Holy Spirit that we should believe that the book of the Acts of the Apostles is never complete, but is really conterminous with the present age? Thus, every generation of every life adds its own gold link to the chain, which reaches from the upper chamber in the earthly Jerusalem to the bridal chamber of the New Jerusalem, uniting in one glorious succession all in whom Jesus continues by the Spirit to speak and work.

When the late Bishop of Ripon read of the labours and sufferings of John Williams in the South Seas, he laid down the narrative, exclaiming, "This is the twenty-ninth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles." May we not rather say the five hundredth or five thousandth? Between the stories of Paul and of John Williams, you must insert thousands which have been recorded of God's remembering angels alone, as well as those which are filling our shelves with missionary romance and biography, more interesting than novels, more wonderful than dreams.

"The book is left incomplete, as it always will be while one believer is left to teach and preach those things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, and to fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in His own flesh for His body's sake, which is the Church." And the question arises, Have you wrought or suffered for Jesus in such ways as to add some verses to those chapters, which are now being written by angel scribes?

April 29

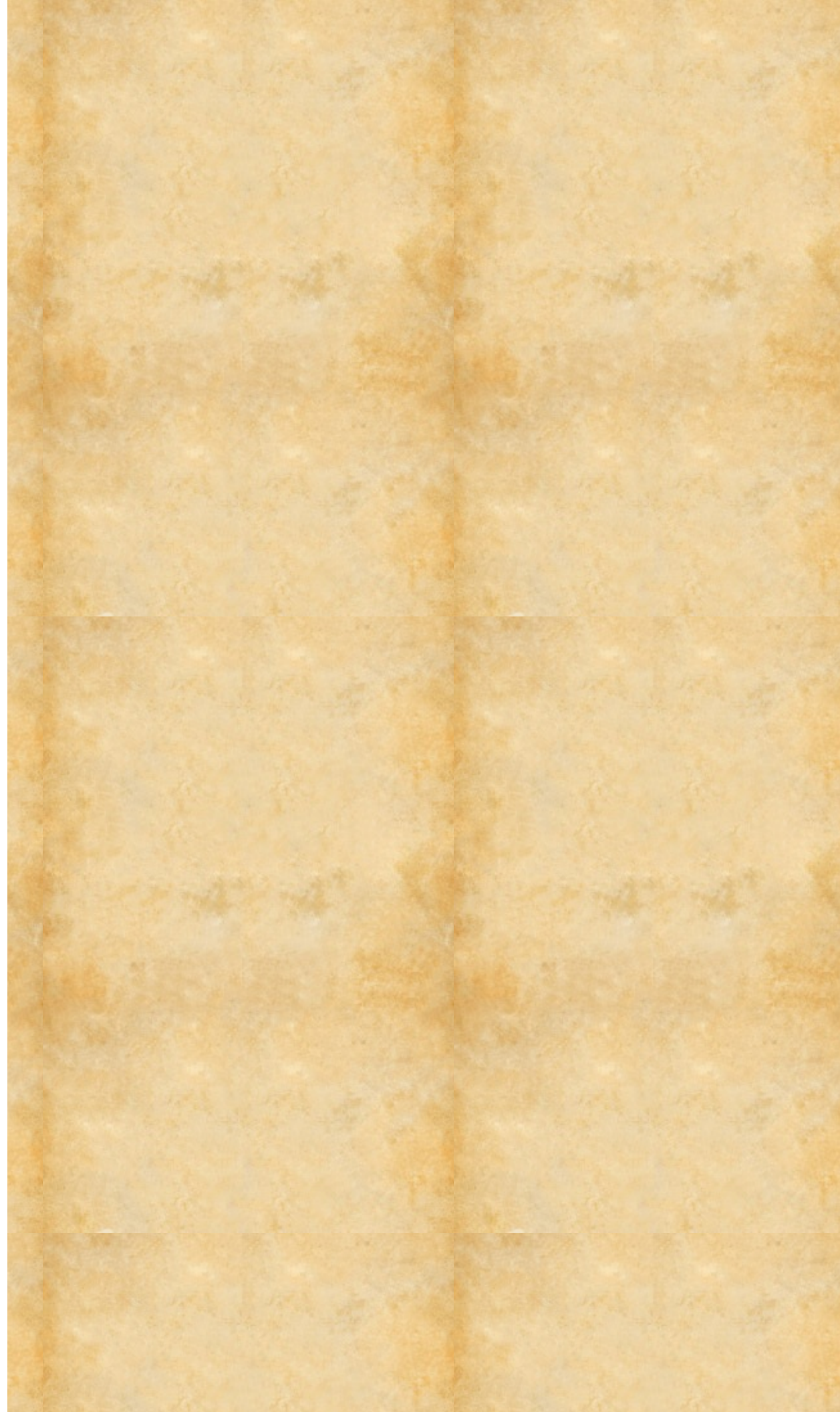
Romans 1:17

“For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.”

IT is important to understand this verse, because it is the key to the Epistle. In the deepest sense, righteousness stands for two things—first, our standing before God; and next, our personal character—our position and our condition—what we are in Jesus, and what we are in ourselves by the Holy Spirit. Hooker, therefore, well expresses the truth when he says, “The righteousness with which we shall be clothed in the world to come, is both perfect and inherent; that wherewith we are justified is perfect, but not inherent; that by which we are sanctified is inherent, but not perfect.” The term righteousness, therefore, covers justification and sanctification, whereof the former is treated in the first five chapters of this Epistle; and to this we confine ourselves.

There is a difference between forgiveness and justification. By forgiveness the sinner may be reinstated in the confidence of Him whom he has wronged; by justification he is declared righteous according to the law, and thereby commended to the confidence and respect of all men.

Justification is our position through the wonderful grace of God, and by virtue of the finished work of Christ, which is imputed to all who believe. All that He is, is reckoned to us who are in Him. We are not merely forgiven, great and wonderful as that act of love and grace would be; but we are dealt with as though we had never sinned. Instead, therefore, of the law being against us, as we deserve, it is on our side, defending and protecting us. Our salvation actually rests on the law. We may claim it as an absolute right. And all this because of God’s infinite grace: because, in the person of Jesus, He has perfectly met, and satisfied, the claims of His holy but broken law.

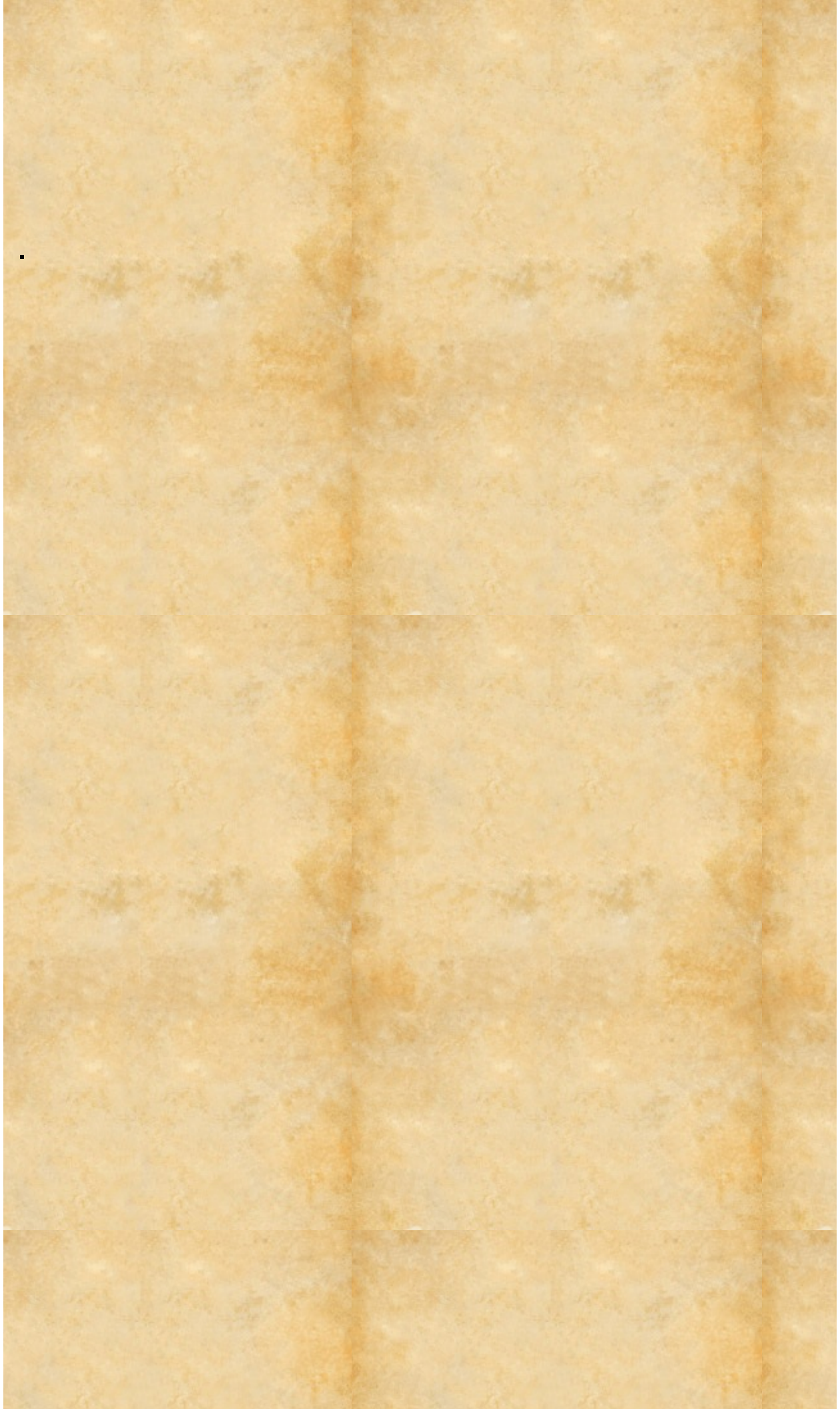


Our Daily Homily

By

F.B. Meyer

- 1. May 1st through 8th**
- 2. May 9th through 15th**
- 3. May 16th through 22nd**
- 4. May 23rd through 31st**



May

May 1

Romans 5:17

“For if by one man’s offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.”

ALL God’s dealings with us are on the same principle. As we received Christ Jesus the Lord, so we must walk in Him.

Whether it be justification or sanctification; whether reconciliation or reigning in life that is under consideration—the same mighty principles underlie and control the Divine gifts and our participation in them. We receive reconciliation as a gift at the beginning of our Christian life, and we have to receive all else by the same medium to the end. Forever and forever we have just to wait till God fills us, as the flower-cups that are now filled with sunshine and now with dew or rain.

You have already received the reconciliation (Romans 5:11)—

Unable to earn it by your own endeavours, you were at last content to receive it as a free gift placed into your open hand; now you have to maintain the same position with respect to all the spiritual gifts that you need for the maintenance of a godly life, and to enable you to reign. Faith—simple, open-handed, heaven-regarding faith—is the one unchanging law of the holy life.

“Trusting Jesus, that is all.”

This reigning in life is not be relegated to the unseen and future —It is meant to be our present experience. He hath made us kings to God, even the Father. We are called to the royalty of men, the abundance, the freedom, the consciousness of power and victory, which we are wont to associate with those who reign. To reign in the ordinary life of the home, the shop, the counting-house—such is our high calling in Christ Jesus. And it may be ours if we receive “abundance of grace” of the one Man, Jesus Christ.

May 2

Romans 6:13

“Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.”

WE must choose. On the one hand stands sin, filling the market-place with its appeals, and bidding for us; on the other hand, God in the person of His Son. For it is well known that to whomsoever we yield ourselves to obey, his servants we shall be.

Sin wants us, not only to work its fell results by us, but to curse and ruin us; whilst God wants to bless us with eternal life.

We may not be able to forecast or to arrange many things in our lives, which are difficult and perplexing; and at first it is not wise to discuss our attitude or action with respect to them. The first and most momentous question which presses for immediate solution is, whether we are prepared to present our members—brain, voice, hand, heart—to God; that through them He may fulfil

His good purpose.

The argument is a very cogent one. The apostle tells us that we have been delivered from death; that in Jesus Christ we have been brought back to stand on the resurrection side of the grave. For such a wondrous deliverance, he exclaims, there is only one adequate return. Present yourselves to be the slaves of your Redeemer. Surely none of us would resemble the rich man, who was saved from drowning by a brave sailor, and offered him half-a-crown in recompense!

In this way also we shall be delivered from sin. Merely to resist and refuse it, is not enough; we shall not get perfect freedom so.

But if we turn to God with a full purpose of heart, and give Him possession, we shall be delivered from the dominion of evil, because the responsibility of our emancipation and perfecting will rest on Him to whom we have yielded spirit, soul and body.

May 3

Romans 7:24

“O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”

THIS chapter is very full of the personal pronoun. Me and I are the pivot around which its argument revolves. The strenuous efforts which the soul makes, not so much to justify as to sanctify itself, to realize its ideal, to walk worthy of the Lord, are well-pleasing, and are described by a master hand.

Is there one of us who has not read these words repeatedly, and in desperation? They have been so exactly true. We have longed with passionate sincerity that a new man might arise in us to free

us from our old man, and make us the men we fain would be. We have been conscious of a subtle force mastering our struggles, like the serpents overcoming Laocoon and his sons; we have realized that a corrupting carcass was bound to our backs, as to the Roman criminals of old, filling the air with miasma, and poisoning our life.

We have cried bitterly, O wretched man ..., who shall deliver?

The key to the plaintive moan of this chapter consists in this. It is the result of the endeavour to live a holy life apart from the power of the indwelling Saviour, and independently of the grace of the Holy Spirit. All such efforts are sure to end in wretchedness.

We can no more sanctify ourselves than we can justify. Deliverance from the power of sin is the gift of God's grace, as forgiveness is.

And it is only when we have come to the very end of all our strivings and resolvings, and have abandoned ourselves to the Saviour, that He should do in us and for us what we cannot do for ourselves, that we are led to cry, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

"All things are possible to God;

To Christ, the power of God in men,

To me, when I am all subdued,

When I, in Christ, am born again."

May 4

Romans 8:26

“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.”

THERE is a threefold groaning here.

CREATION groans (Romans 8:22): The sufferings of the dumb animals, under the brutal tyranny of man; in hard service; in the torture chambers of vivisectionists; to yield pleasure; to give food; or to provide dress—must fill the ear of Heaven with groans. The sighs of myriads of acres, condemned to bear the poisonous poppy or the barley for the manufacture of spirit, must be heard across the broad expanse of space. There is a discord, an oppression, a vanity in the universe around us, which constantly betrays the secret oppression of evil. Goethe said that Nature seemed to him to be like a captive maiden crying aloud for release.

The saints groan (Romans 8:23): We wait for our adoption, for the manifestation of our sonship, for the redemption of our bodies from the last remnants of the fall; and as we wait, we groan beneath the pressure of the present, the weight of mortality, and with eager desire for the blessed advent of the Lord.

The Spirit groans (Romans 8:26): The pressure of sin and sorrow in our world is heavy for Him to bear, and He sighs bitterly, as Jesus did when He stood face to face with the grave of His dead friend.

But these groans portend life, not death. They are full of hope, not despair. They are the pangs of birth, not the throes of death.

Out of the agony of the present the new heavens and earth are being born.

“Unto you is given

To watch for the coming of His feet

Who is the glory of our blessed Heaven.

The work and watching will be very sweet, Even in an earthly home;

And in such an hour as you think not He will come.”

May 5

Romans 9:13

“As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.”

THE apostle is dealing here, not with individuals as such, but with peoples and nations. For instance, Isaac stands for the entire Jewish race—Abraham’s seed (Romans 9:7). He is dealing with the question, why it was that God chose Israel and rejected Edom; chose Jacob and rejected Esau: and he shows that the ultimate decision of their destinies lay in the purpose of God, according to election. The one was elect to be a channel of immense blessing to the world; whilst the other was rejected.

But we must always associate the Divine foreknowledge with the Divine choice. “Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate.” We must regard Jacob and Esau, not as individual personalities merely, but as the founders of nations. For God’s purpose in the building-up of the chosen people, Jacob the methodical and farseeing, was more suited than Esau the freelance, the rover, the child of impulse and passion. And, besides, there were religious aptitudes and capacities within him, of which Esau gave no sign or trace. This does not solve the

entire mystery, perhaps; but only casts it a degree or two further back. Still, it ought to be considered. Like a candle, it casts a slender ray on to the black abyss. In any case, is it not certain that God's choice did alight on him who was most suited to serve the Divine purpose?

It may be that God is wanting to execute His purpose through you. Take heed. Still the savoury dish steams on the desert air, and appeals to the appetite of our natures; and we are strongly tempted to forego the unseen and eternal for a moment's gratification. See to it that for one morsel of meat you do not sell your birthright.

May 6

Romans 10:9

“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”

SALVATION here is evidently to be taken in its most extended meaning. It stands even more for the deliverance of the soul from the love and dominion of sin than for the removal of its justly incurred penalty. That we should be pure in heart, holy in thought, consecrated in life, with all the range of our nature controlled by His indwelling Spirit—such is the Divine intention with respect to us, as suggested by this deep, great word Salvation. But there are two conditions, on our compliance with which this saving power is realized.

We must confess Jesus as Lord: Throughout Scripture there is a close connection between Christ's Royalty and His Saviourship.

“Behold, thy King cometh to thee... having salvation;” “Him hath

God set forth to be a Prince and a Saviour.” “Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of God Most High... made like unto the Son of God, abideth a priest continually.” We shall never know Christ as a Saviour from inbred sin until we have definitely and absolutely enthroned Him in our hearts. A physician is not content with healing outbreaks of disease and fever when they occur; but claims leave to examine all the arrangements of the house, so as to deal with the sources of the mischief.

We must also steadfastly believe in the Resurrection: The risen Lord, sitting at the right hand of God, in all the vigour of an indissoluble life: still working in the world, and energizing the hearts of His own: entering to indwell, to fill, to unite with His own eternal life—such is the vision offered to our faith. Let us look away to Him with a persistent, unwavering gaze, until sin ceases to attract us, and Satan finds a Stronger in possession.

May 7

Romans 11:36

“For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.”

THIS verse reminds us of those lagoons of perfectly still clear water, of which travellers tell. So clear, that it is easily possible to look into their translucent depths to where the submarine foliage waves! So deep, that the ordinary measuring line fails to plumb them! All these words are monosyllables. A child just learning to read could easily spell them out. But who shall exhaust their meaning?

Of Him: The entire scheme of redemption; the marvellous history of the chosen people, with which this chapter is occupied; the universe of matter, all are included in the all things that have

emanated out of God. No one has been His counsellor, or given aught to Him. From all created things, which are as the stream, let us climb to Him, who is their fountain, source, and origin; and in Him let us learn to fill our own souls to the very brim.

Through Him: Through Jesus Christ, the Mediator, God has poured the entire grace and wealth of His nature to bless and help us. There is no good thing that does not come to us through the mediation of the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. Through Him He made the worlds. Through Him we have received the reconciliation. Through Him, also, all grace is made to abound toward us. Never forget to magnify the Lord Jesus as the source of all your supply.

To Him: Creation, Providence, Redemption, are all tending back to God. The tide is setting in toward the throne. A revenue of glory shall yet accrue from all that has happened within the parenthesis of time. Every whit in the great temple shall one day say "Glory!"

May 8

Romans 12:1

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

TO present carries us back to Romans 6. We might almost say that the intervening chapters, after the manner of the apostle, are one prolonged digression or parenthesis, and that he classes all the great things with which he has been treating as among the mercies of God, and as reasons for our entire consecration. Every disclosure of God's grace toward us is an argument for our complete surrender to His will and power.

We are called on to present our bodies as instruments of righteousness, because all true regimen of the inner life immediately affects the body in all its members; and, conversely, the consecration of the body reacts upon and affects the temper of the soul. It would be well for you to take Miss Havergal's hymn, with its enumeration of the various parts of the body, and offer and present yourself, to be from this day and forward, wholly for God.

Only believe that He is more anxious for this than words can tell, because He loves you so, and that He accepts immediately what you offer.

Such consecration must be living; that is, it must enter into all our life, being holy, well pleasing to God, and rational. It is not only reasonable when we consider the relation we sustain to Him, but it should engage all our intelligence and reasoning faculties.

And when it is made, and the soul is becoming duly transfigured in its exercise, we begin to prove that God's will, which once we dreaded, is also good, well-pleasing, and perfect. When we look at God's will from a distance, and before consecration, it seems impossible. It is only when we begin to obey, that we can say:

"Thou sweet beloved will of God."

May

May 9

Romans 13:14

“But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof .”

THIS verse is ever memorable from its association with the life of Augustine, who says: “Thus was I sick and tormented in mind, bitterly accusing myself, and rolling and turning about in my chain, till it might be wholly broken.”

At length, rushing into the garden, groaning in spirit, “all my bones were crying out, soul-sick was I and grievously tormented. I said to myself, ‘Be it done now; be it done now.’ And a voice said,

‘Why standest thou in thyself, and so standest not? Cast thyself upon Him. Fear not; He will not withdraw Himself, to let thee fall.

He will receive, and will heal thee. Stop thine ears against those unclean members of thine, which are upon the earth, that they may be mortified.’”

Then arose a mighty tempest, bringing a heavy downpour of tears. “I cast myself under a certain fig-tree, and gave rein to my tears, and the floods of mine eyes brake forth. Why not now? Why not this hour make an end of my uncleanness? And, lo! from the neighbouring house I heard a voice as of a boy or girl, I know not which, singing and oft repeating, ‘Take and read; take and read!’

Checking the torrent of my tears, I arose, interpreting it to be a Divine command to open the Book and read the first chapter I could find. I seized; I opened, and in silence read the passage on which mine eyes fell: 'Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.' No further would I read; nor was there need, for instantly all my heart was flooded with a light of peace, all the sadness of doubt melted away!"

May 10

Romans 14:18

"For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men."

DEAN Howson renders this verse thus: "He who lives in these things as Christ's bondsman is well-pleasing to God, and cannot be condemned by men." There are two rules, therefore, to be observed by us when we consider our behaviour in that great border-land which lies between the dark and light, the clearly wrong and clearly right. We are all conscious of habits and tastes, of inclinations toward certain forms of amusement and recreation, of methods of life, which do not contravene any distinct law of God, but are certainly open to question. It is such things that fall within the scope of these two principles.

First, we must always remember that we are Christ's bondservants: Let us look then, every day and hour, and as to the mental habit, every moment, upon Jesus Christ as our Master.

Saintly George Herbert chose that to be, as it were, his best-beloved aspect of his Saviour; "My Master, Jesus." "An oriental

fragrance, my Master.” Let us do the same. Let us wear the word next to the heart, next to the will; nay, let it sink into the very springs of both, deeper every day. And as each fresh question arises in our life, let us stand close beside Him, noticing the expression of His face, asking Him what He would desire, and always reckoning that the least suggestion of His preference is law. “None of us liveth to himself: for, whether we live, we live unto the Lord.”

Second, we must always bear in mind the spiritual life of others: We are to put no stumbling-block, or occasion for falling, in another’s way. It is good neither to eat flesh, nor drink wine, nor to do any other thing, whereby our brother is made to stumble. Let us each of us please his neighbour for good ends, to build him up; for Christ pleased not Himself.

May 11

Romans 15:18

“For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed,”

ALL things that have not sprung from the indwelling and inworking power of Christ, are probably valueless in the sight of God. As the apostle dared not record them in this book, so probably they are not recorded in God’s book. They lack the one principle or germ of life. Our Lord said, Separate from Me ye can do nothing; and probably, therefore, whatever we do out of living union with Him amounts to nothing.

These words are a window into the apostle’s inner life. He was ever looking to the Lord to work through him, in the power of the Holy Ghost. He had nothing, therefore, to boast of, as he

reviewed his labours; the impulse in which they originated, and the success with which they were crowned, were alike attributable to the Son of God, who had been revealed and formed within.

Let us so yield ourselves to Him, that the great Master may fulfil through us also all the good pleasure of His will.

Let us wait before Him in earnest expectancy, till the foundation of His purpose begins to arise within us; and let us receive from Him the gracious power of which to realize His plans. "I cannot,"

one may say, "give that tract; speak to that fellow-traveller; witness for Christ on that ship or in that shop; stand up in that pulpit and preach." No, perhaps not. But you can let Christ do these things through you.

"So others shall,

Take patience, labour, to their heart and land, from thy land. and thy heart and thy brave cheer, And God's grace fructify through thee to all.

The least flower with a brimming cup may stand And share its dewdrop with another near."

May 12

Romans 16:23

"Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you. Erastus the chamberlain of the city saluteth you, and Quartus a brother."

THAT is all we know about him. The others whose names are written here are more or less famous. Tertius wrote the Epistle;

Gaius was evidently a man of influence; Erastus was the treasurer of the city, and so on. But Quartus was just a humble, simple Christian, who had no handle to his name, save his brotherliness and his desire to assure his Roman brethren, whom probably he had never seen, of his love to them. “So he begs a little corner in Paul’s letter, and gets it; and there, in his little niche, like some statue of a forgotten saint scarce seen amidst the glories of a great cathedral, ‘Quartus the brother’ stands to all time.”

What a lesson in humility! Seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not. Be content to live and die unknown, except for the love that breathes through thy life, not to those of thine own circle merely, but for those across the sea, with whom thou wouldst fain strike hands. Thy one joy, that thou hast been born into the family of God. Thy creed, that all regenerate souls, of every name and sect, are members of the same family, children of the same Father, and therefore one in ties of peculiar tenderness and strength.

What a revelation this slight reference is to the new binding forces of the Gospel! At the Advent the world was split by great gulfs of national hatred; fierce enmities of race, language, and religion; wide separations far profounder than anything that we know. And then the Gospel came, which began to gather men of every race into one family, in Jesus Christ, the Divine Elder-brother; and from this, uniting influences of brotherhood began to permeate the world.

May 13

1 Corinthians 1:9

“God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.”

THE word for fellowship is the same that is employed in Luke 5:10, of James and John being partners with Simon. We have been called into partnership with the Son of God, in His redemptive purposes, His love and tears for men, and ultimately in His triumph and glory. He has entered into partnership with man, and we are now summoned into partnership with Him through the communion of the Holy Ghost. in the words of the apostle, “our fellowship [or partnership] is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.”

How fruitful of comfort is the thought that Christ’s interests are ours, and that we are at liberty to draw upon His resources to the uttermost. Suppose a poor clerk were to be summoned from his desk into the counting-house of a Rothschild, and informed that from that moment he was taken into partnership with the firm: would it not be less of an honour than this which has fallen to our lot? Association with millionaires in money-making were infinitely less desirable than association with the Son of God in world-saving. And would that poor clerk feel any anxiety as to his share in meeting the immense liabilities of the concern? However great they might be, he would know that the resources of the firm were adequate, and he would be able to sleep easily at night, though millions were due on the morrow. Child of God, cannot thy Father meet all His Son’s engagements?

The call to this partnership is from the Father. It is He who has chosen us for this high honour of cooperating with His Son. Will He have led us into such an association, and leave us to be overwhelmed by the difficulties of the situation He has created? It cannot be! He will supply all our need.

May 14

1 Corinthians 2:10

“But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.”

EYES of my soul, ye have no need to wait until the veil of the flesh that screens off the beatific vision has been rent in twain by the mighty hands of the Angel of Death, ere ye behold the land that floweth with milk and honey!

Ears of my heart, ye need not remain dull and listless till the peal of the archangel's trumpet thrill you, and summon you to the music of the harpers harping on their harps or the chime of the glassy sea.

Heart of mine, be expectant! Awake! Lo, there shall come into thee, penetrating, pervading, filling thy every recess, all those blessed things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.

They shall enter thee, as a retinue of knights might enter a beleaguered castle to make it strong against any possible combination of the foe.

Only I must love God. Through Isaiah I am taught that I must wait for Him (Isaiah 54:4); here I learn that I must love. For love is quick to know. He that loveth knoweth God. It was the apostle whom Jesus loved that beheld Him on the margin of the lake. It is to the warm, tender atmosphere of loving hearts that the unchecked, ungrieved Spirit unfolds His secrets. Let me, therefore, bathe myself in the gracious atmosphere of my Saviour's presence, never going outside its genial glow, never falling behind His going forth, until I am entrusted, through the Spirit, with the deep things of God.

“God only knows the love of God;

Oh that it now were shed abroad

In this poor stony heart!

For love I sigh, for love I pine,

This only portion, Lord, be mine—

Be mine this better part!”

May 15

1 Corinthians 3:10

“According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.”

A FITTING illustration of the Christian life for the people of Corinth, famed for its architecture. We are all builders, whether we choose or not! We may be temple-builders! Each heart, each life, each character, may become a temple of the Holy Spirit.

Every act we do, every word we utter, the way in which we spend any moments of our time, is either a fragment of gold, silver and precious stones, or of wood, hay and stubble, built into the rising structure of the erection entrusted to our skill and pains. It does not so much matter what we do, but how we do it. Every time we perform any action with the best motives and spirit, we deposit a tiny grain of gold-dust; whenever, on the other hand, we do aught after a slovenly, superficial, and careless manner, we weave into the structure of character a material which will yield as inevitably in the hour of temptation as wood, hay and stubble before flame.

We sometimes, at the end of the day, reviewing the past hours, bitterly lament that we have done nothing in the way of

character-building. "There is nothing to show for this day," we say mentally to ourselves. Ah! but there is. Every moment has left its record on your heart. Every act has left you confirmed in a good habit or in a bad one. The soul-life has not halted for a second; one has been growing to moral health, or toward decrepitude, consumption, and decay. If not gold, then wood; if not silver, then hay; if not costly stones, then stubble.

We shall not be saved on account of our works. The only thing that can secure salvation is the being built into God's foundation, the Rock Christ Jesus. But we shall be rewarded according to the manner in which we have built up the structure.

May

May 16

1 Corinthians 4:4

“For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord.”

THERE are four courts of trial.

First: Man’s judgment—It is significantly spoken of as man’s “day.” Our conduct is narrowly scrutinized and weighed by many eyes which we know not of, but which are fixed on every act and word—the eyes of our neighbours, associates, fellow-work people, servants. They are ever reasoning about us, comparing our lives with our professions, partly with the view of excusing themselves, if there is any gross inconsistency. But, after all, their verdict need not greatly move us. It is only for a day.

Second: The judgment of fellow-Christians—We are perpetually being summoned before the court of the church circle to which we belong; not always because we are inconsistent with our professions, but whenever we overstep the pace at which the majority is slowly moving. To be too zealous, too eager, too earnest, too particular, will, in some Christian communities, expose us to a great deal of adverse criticism. But we have not to look right and left to get the sentence of our fellow-believers when we are clearly prompted by the Spirit of God.

Third: The judgment of conscience—“I judge not mine own self.” We are all apt to arraign ourselves at our own bar, and pass verdicts which are altogether favourable, because we compare

ourselves with characters and standards inferior to ourselves. It is a great mistake to judge yourself, for even if you score a favourable verdict—if you know nothing against yourself—it is liable to be reversed by the decisions of the Supreme Court.

Fourth: The Lord's judgment—The Lord will come, bringing to light the hidden things of darkness, and making manifest the counsels of the heart.

May 17

1 Corinthians 5:7-8

“Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”

AT the time of the first Passover, outside, as the ominous midnight hour approached, Egypt gave herself up to her usual life. “They ate and drank; they married and gave in marriage.” But within their homes, the children of Israel stood around their tables, their loins girt, their staves in their hands, with unleavened bread packed up with their kneading-troughs in their clothes, waiting for the signal to depart. The Passover Lamb had been sacrificed; its blood was on the door; whilst its flesh, roast with fire, was being eaten. For seven days, all leavened bread had been put away out of the houses of the chosen people, because leaven, in the Bible, is the symbol of the working of the corrupt principle.

The believer should look back: The Paschal Lamb was sacrificed for us on the cross. Though He had done no sin, and was without blemish, yet He was slain for us without the gates of the city. He

made there a sufficient sacrifice, satisfaction, oblation, for the sins of the whole world.

The believer should look around: With lighted candle, search the heart of your house, that there may be no speck or mote of leaven.

Let us keep the perpetual feast of the Christian life, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

The believer should look on: Soon we shall hear the midnight trumpet sound, “Arise and depart, for this is not your rest!” and we shall go forth from Egypt, where we have suffered, and toiled, and been misunderstood; where also our Lord was crucified. It is but a little while (how little, how little!) and He that shall come will come and will not tarry.

May 18

1 Corinthians 6:19

“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?”

THIS is a sentence which should be deeply pondered; every clause is significant. We evidently should know its deep and solemn meaning. Apparently it is one of the commonplaces of our holy religion. This knowledge, however, should not be merely that of the intellect, but born out of the deep musing of the heart.

The holy temple: Built up of the dust of the earth, our bodies are rarer than the most glorious structures that ever the sun shone on, because they are meant to be the shrine and home of God.

Jesus spoke of the Temple of His Body; and if He was so zealous for His Father's House that He drove out the unholy traffickers, and refused to allow a vessel to be carried through the courts, should we not be equally careful? We are the custodians of the Divine residence; let us be very careful that there be nothing to offend or trouble the celestial Inmate.

The Divine Inmate: Too often He is grieved, and driven to occupy the most secret shrine, concealed and hidden beneath the heavy veil of our inconsistency and unbelief. He is not driven out by our sins, but driven in. Whenever, on the contrary, we put away our sin, and walk in the light as He is in the light; whenever the veil is rent and the whole heart thrown open to Him—He comes in power to occupy every part of our being, so that there is no part dark, and the very body becomes transfigured.

The great Price: Bought as any slave standing in the marketplace for sale! Ransomed from the direst slave master to the dearest Lord! The price—not corruptible things, as silver and gold—but precious blood! Our life is henceforth not our own, but His.

May 19

1 Corinthians 7:24

“Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God.”

STRONG temptations to restlessness beset the early Christians.

The great change through which they had passed from heathenism to Christ threatened to dissolve all the ties by which they had been held, in the home, the business, and the State. Very necessary and wholesome, therefore, was the apostle's advice. Stay as you are, until God clearly leads you into

something else—only with this difference, whatever be the vocation of your life, therein abide with God. Paul was only careful that the thought of God should penetrate their entire existence; all else would come right in time; and he was only anxious that they should be laid hold of by that central, vivifying, transmuting influence.

Practice the presence of God: A godly brother used to say that we should establish ourselves in a sense of God's presence by an act of the will, which put aside wandering, frivolous, and evil thoughts, and that we should be continually conversing with Him; that we ought to give ourselves up to God, making Him the end of all our actions, and seeking our only satisfaction in doing His will; and that even the set times of prayer should not greatly differ from other times, because all were equally filled with God.

Such a sense equalizes our lot: The slave realizes that he is God's free man; the master that he is God's slave. The poor are enriched, and the rich are convicted of their poverty. So this holy brother said that, in his business in the kitchen (to which naturally he had a great aversion), having accustomed himself to do everything there for the love of God and with prayer, he had found everything easy, and was very well pleased to continue in the same post so long as it was God's will.

May 20

1 Corinthians 8:13

“Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.”

THERE are two principles for our guidance in doubtful and debatable questions. First, the law of conscience: The apostle does not hesitate to say that the scruples of the weaker brethren

were unquestionably needless. Idols have no real existence, and the presentation of food in their presence before it is eaten is a matter of complete indifference. “If we eat, we are not the better; if we eat not, we are not the worse.” At the same time, if a man were not able to reach this high standard, and still believed that an idol had a real existence, and that it was wrong for him to partake of food which had been offered to it, he must abide by that decision, and must on no account force himself to more liberal action. His conscience might be misinformed, and he should take every means of bringing it to a more healthy condition; but if it still remained stationary, he must accept its ruling.

Secondly, the law of charity: We must consider one another. No one liveth to himself. We are members of the body of Christ, and have no right to injure any who are so closely allied with us, and on whose healthy existence our own materially depends. If, then, we see that certain other souls are constantly being caused to stumble, because of what we do; not simply surprised and startled, but actually made to sin; trying to do as we do, but as often as they attempt it, falling short; unable to take our steep path without falling; always brought into condemnation when in our company; there is no alternative—for their sakes we must forego what is innocent and pleasant to ourselves. It may be a daily glass of wine, or attendance at some form of amusement, or some evil habit—but the love of Christ forbids.

May 21

1 Corinthians 9:27

“But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”

IS it for one moment to be supposed that Paul really feared being cast away from the love and presence of God into the outer darkness with its weeping and gnashing of teeth? Surely not! Had he not said unmistakably that nothing could avail to separate him from the love of God which was in Jesus Christ! No, it is impossible to think such a thing. He knew too well that none of Christ's members can be amputated; none of His sheep perish.

"The soul that to Jesus has fled for repose, He will not, He cannot, desert to its foes; That soul, though all hell should endeavour to take, He'll never—no, never—no, never forsake."

But when the apostle speaks of being a castaway, he means that he feared lest, after having proclaimed the rules of the contest to others, he should himself fail shamefully of the prize. And what was that prize? Certainly not forgiveness, nor eternal life; because these are not procured by any efforts of our own. These are not the prizes of agility or strength, but the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. What, then, is the prize? The context reveals it. It is surely the guerdon of winning souls; the blessed joy and crown of bringing to Jesus those who had otherwise never known Him.

But we may fall short of this. We may set others to do what we fail to do. We may appear before Christ with handfuls of withered leaves. We may yet be rejected. Esau missed the crown of his birthright; Moses the Promised Land; Saul the founding of a line of kings. We may miss utterly and irretrievably. God help us to watch and pray, and bring the body into subjection!

May 22

1 Corinthians 10:33

“Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.”

PROBABLY the world has never seen a more enthusiastic soul-winner than the great apostle. If he visits a strange town, he will cast out the demon from a possessed girl. If he takes up tent making, beside an unbelieving Jew and his wife, he will before long have won each for Christ. If he is cast into prison, he will have baptized the jailer before dawn. If he stands before a judge, he will almost persuade him to be a Christian. If he is a prisoner in a hired house, he will speak to all who come to him, and win a runaway slave like Onesimus to Christ, and make him profitable to Philemon. Always and everywhere, he sets himself to win souls.

Here, also, we see how this one passion ruled his behaviour in all things. He was willing to yield to men in matters where only his own comfort, but not his conscience, was concerned. He sought to please all men in all things; not seeking his own profit, but “the profit of the many, that they may be saved.”

Oh for more of this sacred passion!—such as inspired, for instance, the Moravians to expatriate themselves for the sake of the lepers of Table Bay!

A woman at the Presbyterian hospital at Canton, hearing of Christ, and loving Him, asked:

“How long can I live if I remain in the hospital?”

“Four months.”

“And how long if I go home?” “Two months,” replied the doctor. “I am going home,” she said.

“But,” urged the doctor, “you will lose half your life.”

“Do you not think I would be glad to give half my life for the sake of telling my people of Jesus?”

And she went home.

May

May 23

1 Corinthians 11:29

“For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body.”

HOW many humble and earnest souls has been kept from the blessed enjoyment of the Lord’s Table! They did not understand the nature of the sin which the apostle was describing; they were terrified by the word damnation, and they felt that it were better to forego the privilege than risk the peril.

The difficulties will, however, largely disappear, when we understand the disorders that disgraced the Corinthian Church, and which arose from the abuses of the love-feast which preceded the Lord’s Supper. At that repast each disciple was expected to put the provisions he had brought with him into a common stock, from which all shared alike. But at Corinth, the rich and their friends ate of their luxuries; whilst the poor were allowed to go without. After such an introduction, the Church could not approach the Lord’s Table with that appreciation of the solemnity and tenderness of the ordinance which could alone consist with the holy memories of the betrayal night.

The eating and drinking unworthily arose from not discerning the Body. This does not refer to the Lord’s Body which was broken for us; but to His Body the Church. “The bread which we break, is it not a communion of the body of Christ, seeing that we, who are many, are one bread, one body?” (1 Corinthians 10:16-17). We eat and drink unworthily when we fail to discern that the

poor, and weak, and simple, who belong to Jesus, belong also to us; that they are members with us; and that we are bound to share our gifts and graces with them for the glory of our common Lord. The one thing which disqualifies us from joining in this feast of dying love is our refusal to feel and manifest love to all in the Body.

May 24

1 Corinthians 12:3

“Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.”

JESUS is Saviour, but is He Lord? Hast thou yielded to Him the Lordship? Nothing short of this will give thee true peace and power. Thou must be brought to say with the psalmist, “Other lords beside Thee have had dominion over me; but by Thee only will I make mention of Thy name.”

Jesus must be Lord of thy heart; every affection must be brought under His most wise and loving control. He must be Lord of thy home, so that no conversation may be indulged, no recreation set afoot, no society entertained, which is inconsistent with His character and claims. He must be Lord of thy business and its returns, so that thou shalt live in perpetual communication with Him, along the lines of the Heavenly Telephone; and in the use of all its proceeds He must have the supreme voice. He must be Lord of thy plans. It is for Him to say Go, or Come, or Do this. That was a true message which Ahasuerus sent through the good Ezra to the Jewish people: “Whatsoever is commanded by the God of heaven, let it be done exactly for the house of the God of heaven.” I liked that word exactly.

But this perpetual recognition of the Lordship of Jesus is only possible to those who have yielded their entire nature to the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit, who love to glorify Christ.

Dost thou seek the attitude of consecration which thus honours thy Lord? Then let the Holy Spirit work it for thee! Wouldst thou have it maintained? Let Him maintain it! And if thou askest thyself, whether thou hast received the Pentecostal endowment, be sure that thou hast, if with all thine heart thou sayest that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. This is the certain test.

May 25

1 Corinthians 13:13

“And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.”

WHAT a light must have shone on the apostle's face as he broke into this exquisite idyll, this perfect poem of love! The change in tone and rhythm must have caused his amanuensis to look suddenly up into his master's face, and lo! it was as the face of an angel. Why is love greatest?

Because it is the crown of the other two, and includes them: Faith is the root; hope is the stem; love the perfect flower. You may have faith without hope, and hope without love; but you cannot have love apart from faith and hope.

Because it is likest God: God's nature is not specially characterized by faith, because there is no uncertainty with His perfect knowledge; nor by hope, because there is no future to His eternal existence. But God is love; and to love is to resemble Him.

Because it will immeasurably outlast the other two: Human knowledge, at best but the spellings of babes, will vanish in the perfect light of heaven. Eloquence will seem like the lisplings of infancy. Prophecies will have no place, because all the landscape of the future will be revealed. Faith and hope will be lost in realization. Love only is forever.

Because love brings the purest rapture: “Where is heaven?” asked a wealthy Christian of his minister. “I will tell you where it is,” was the quick reply: “if you will go to the store, and buy £10 worth of provisions and necessities, and take them to that poor widow on the hillside, who has three of her children sick. She is poor, and a member of the Church. Take a nurse, and some one to cook the food. When you get there, read the twenty-third Psalm, and kneel by her side and pray. Then you will find out where heaven is.”

May 26

1 Corinthians 14:10

“There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification.”

THERE are the voices of nature: The deep bass of the ocean wave booming along the shore; the crash of the ice; the silver choirs of the stars; the song of bird, hum of bee, shrill trumpet of gnat, the rustle of the leaves, the patter of the rain, the chorus of the hailstones—how varied, and charming, and musical! No doubt if we could listen to all these from a distance we should detect perfect chords.

There are the voices of human life: First, the mother’s; then of

the brothers and sisters of our home (and sad is the lot of the lonely child which has none); then of the teacher, the minister, the friend, the lover, not one could be spared; not one that has not a significance; not one to whose words we shall not do well to give heed.

There are the voices of our daily lot: Now we are called to experience joy, now sorrow, now gain, and now loss; now of the harsh reprimand of disaster; now of the tender assurances of sunny hours. Behind all these God is speaking. Listen, therefore, heedfully to all, and try to acquire the lesson He is longing to inculcate. What is He saying to you, by your circumstances, at this moment? Is it in tones of pleading, of remonstrance, of blame?

“Where is Thy favoured haunt, Eternal Voice, The region of Thy choice,

Where, undisturbed by sin and earth, the soul Owns Thy entire control?

“Tis then we hear the voice of God within, Pleading with care and sin;

‘Child of My Love,

How have I wearied thee?’”

May 27

1 Corinthians 15:20

“But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.”

WORDS which are altogether transcendent! How they thrill us and inspire! What memories they recall! How impossible is it not to feel their majesty. Surely no brain nor lip of man had begotten them! They bear the mint-mark of heaven.

On the day that Jesus arose, the first-fruit sheaf of the barley harvest was being waved by the High Priest in the Temple, as the representative of the myriads that stood stacked amid the stubble of the fields. It was the specimen sheaf—representative, pattern, and pledge of all the rest. The risen Christ is the pattern and pledge of what His people will be when their bodies shall be fashioned anew in the likeness of His resurrection.

He is pattern: His body bore the same general outlines as before; so will theirs. It was recognizable by those who had known and loved Him, even to the tones of His voice; so will it be with theirs.

It was the ethereal and pliant instrument of His spirit; so will theirs be. It could no more return to corruption; no more will theirs. It was invulnerable to disease and pain; such an experience awaits them too.

He is pledge: He does not stand alone. He is united to us by a myriad indissoluble ties. What the power of God did for Him it will do for us. Those that sleep in Jesus God will bring with Him, and we that are alive and remain shall be caught up. There shall not a hoof be left behind. Not one purchased body of a saint, however obscure or unworthy, shall be excepted from the effect of the voice of the archangel and the trump of God. Meanwhile, in the kindly embrace of Mother Earth, like the seed-germs of a vast harvest, the resurrection principle in the bodies of the saints awaits the resurrection signal.

May 28

1 Corinthians 16:22

“If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha.”

THIS sentence reminds us of the saintly Samuel Rutherford, of whose Letters the holy Richard Baxter said: “Hold off the Bible, such a book the world never saw.” And the late revered and beloved C. H. Spurgeon said of them: “When we are dead and gone, let the world know that Spurgeon held Rutherford’s Letters to be the nearest thing to inspiration which can be found in all the writings of mere men.”

Take this extract, because it indicates how you may come to love the Lord Jesus as he did:

“Strive to make prayer, and reading, and holy company, and holy conference, your delight; and when delight cometh in, you shall, by little and little, find the sweetness of Christ, till at length your soul be over head and ears in Christ’s sweetness. Then shall you be taken up to the top of the mountain with the Lord, to know the delights of spiritual love, and the glory and excellency of a seen, revealed, felt and embraced Christ; and then you shall not be able to loose yourself off from Christ, and to bind your soul to old lovers; then, and never till then, are all the paces, motions, and wheels of your soul in a right tune and in a spiritual temper.

“But if this world and the lusts thereof be your delight, I know not what Christ can make of you; you cannot be metal for a vessel of glory and mercy. My desire is that my Lord would give me broader and deeper thoughts to feed myself with wondering at His love. I would I could weigh it, but I have no balance for it. When I have worn my tongue to the stump in praising Christ, I have done nothing to Him. What remaineth then, but that my debt to the love of Christ lie unpaid for all eternity!”

May 29

2 Corinthians 1:4

“Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.”

CHILD of God, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which tries thee, as though some strange thing had happened.

Rejoice, inasmuch as it is a sure sign that thou art on the right track. All the saints have gone by this road, notably the writer of this Epistle.

Its keyword is affliction, because written amid afflictions so great that the apostle despaired of life. It is steeped in affliction, as a handkerchief with the flowing blood of a fresh wound. But in this passage the apostle has built himself a little chamber of comfort, the stones of which were quarried from the pit of his own sorrow.

He blesses God, who had led him into affliction to teach him the art of comfort, that by observing how God comforted, he might become proficient in the art.

The world is full of comfortless hearts—orphan children crying in the night. Our God pities them, and would comfort them through thee. But ere thou undertake this lofty ministry thou must be trained, and thou must therefore pass through the very trials that they are exposed to. Now watch how God comforts thee. Keep a diary, if thou wilt, of His procedure. Ponder in thine heart the length of each splint, the folds of each bandage, the ministration of each opiate, cordial or drug. This will have a two-fold effect, in turning thy thoughts from thy miseries to thy mercies, and in taking away the sense of useless and aimless existence.

There is evidently scope for comfort even in heaven, for it is said that God will wipe away tears from all faces. Oh thou that art sorrowful even unto death, be sure that some day the Comforter will get the victory over thy sorest griefs.

May 30

2 Corinthians 2:15

“For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish:”

THE idea is borrowed from an ancient Roman triumph, which to the eyes of the world of that day was the most glorious spectacle which the imagination could conceive. The apostle compares himself first to one of the prisoners led in long chains behind the conqueror’s chariot; then to a servant bearing incense; and lastly to the incense itself that rose all along the line of the procession.

Nothing touches the sense more quickly than sweet odours, unless it be noxious ones; and they almost instantly recall some scene of the past with which they were indissolubly associated. For instance, the scent of new-mown hay will carry us off to merry scenes in the far away days of childhood. Thus the apostle wished that his life might be a sweet perfume, floating on the air, reminding men, and above all reminding God, of Christ. It was as though he said, “I desire so to live that I may perpetually remind God of the obedience, sacrifice, and devotion of the Lord Jesus, so that my words and deeds may recall to His heart similar ones in the earthly life of Jesus.”

A sweet savour of Christ! It does not consist so much in what we do, but in our manner of doing it; not so much in our words or deeds, as in an indefinable sweetness, tenderness, courtesy, unselfishness, and desire to please others to their edification. It

is the breath and fragrance of a life hidden with Christ in God, and deriving its aroma from fellowship with Him. Wrap the habits of your soul in the sweet lavender of your Lord's character.

The secret of abounding joy in self-sacrifice is the happy consciousness, such as Enoch had, that we have pleased God. To have this is to secure deliverance from self-consciousness.

May 31

2 Corinthians 3:18

“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

MOSES veiled his face, and the veiled lawgiver was characteristic of the dispensation he inaugurated. It was a partial revelation, gleaming through a veil, expressing truths in rites and types and symbols. But Christ has torn away the veil, removed the fences of the mount of vision, and revealed to babes the deepest secrets of God's heart. The apostle's phrase is characteristic of Christianity, “Behold, I show you (i.e., unveil) a mystery.”

The object of visions: “The glory of the Lord.” Concerning which we may accept the statement of a trustworthy commentator, that the reference is not to the incomprehensible, incommunicable lustre of the absolute Divine perfectness; but to that glory which, as John says, tabernacled in the Lord Jesus Christ, full of grace and truth—the glory of loving, pitying words and lovely deeds; the glory of faultless and complete manhood; the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

The nature of the vision: “We behold.” It is true that we cannot

see. “Whom, not having seen, ye love.” But it is also true that the heart has eyes, by which it looks away unto Jesus. “Seeing is believing,” is a familiar proverb among men; but “believing is seeing” is a true aphorism of the spirit which clings to the Lord by its faith and love.

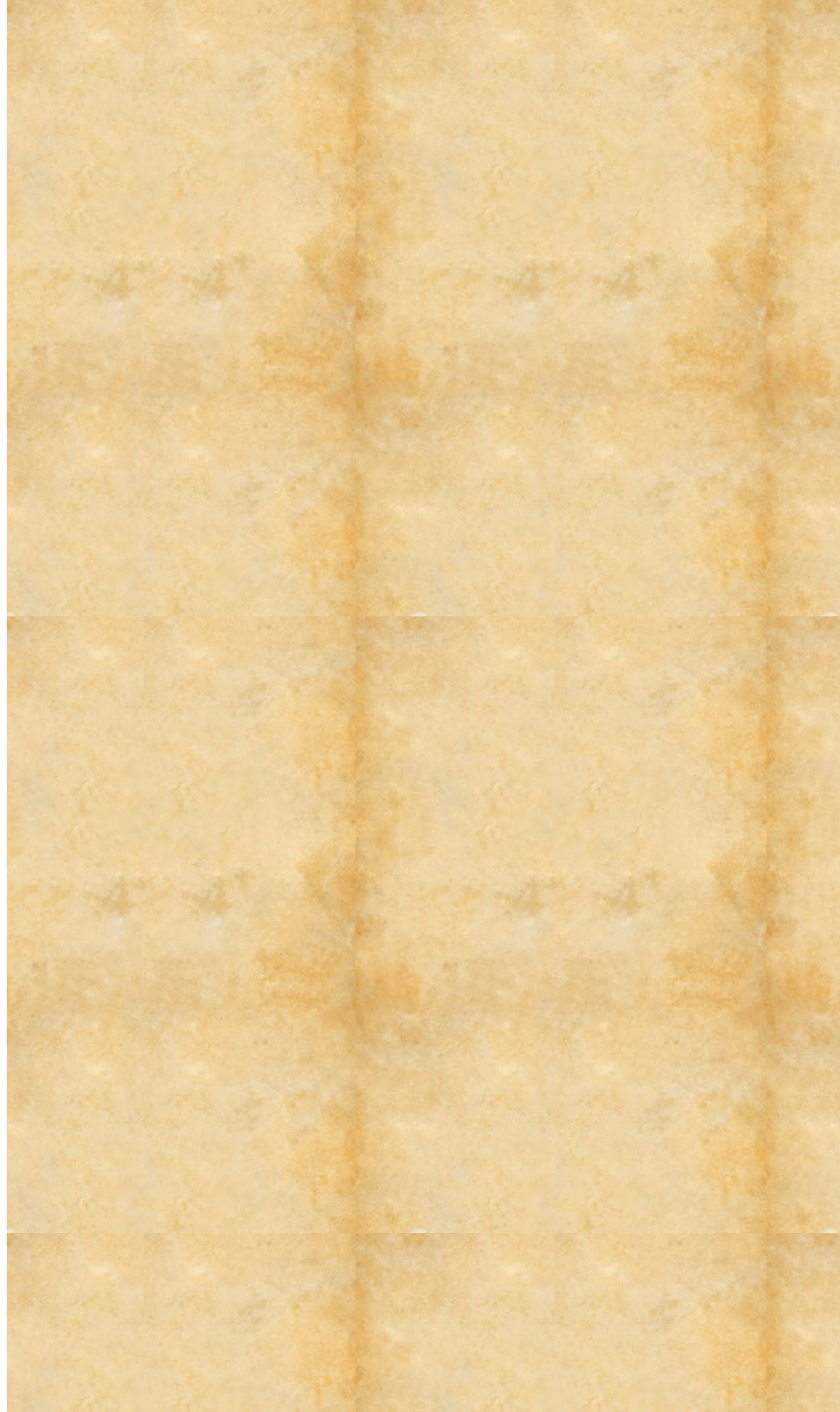
The effect of the vision: First, we reflect. The beauty of His face glancing on ours will be mirrored, as a man’s eye will contain a tiny miniature picture of what he is beholding. Then we shall be changed. If you try to represent Jesus in your character and behaviour, you will become transfigured into His likeness. Love makes like. Imitation produces assimilation. Reflect and resemble.

Our Daily Homily

By

F.B. Meyer

1. **June 1st through 5th**
2. **June 6th through 12th**
3. **June 13th through 19th**
4. **June 20th through 30th**



June

June 1

John 1:50

“Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these.”

GOD’S dealings with us are always on an ascending scale. If we see clearly the lowest rung in the heavenly ladder, whilst we behold, the veil of mist will part, and we shall see the next above it, and then the next, and, in due order, the next; and so the steps that slope away through darkness up to God will always be beckoning to greater and yet greater things.

Have you known Christ as the Word? He is more; both Spirit and Life.

Has He become flesh? You shall behold Him glorified with the glory He had before the worlds.

Have you known Him as Alpha, before all? He is also Omega.

Have you met John? You shall meet One so much greater, that the latchet of His shoes the Baptist shall deem himself unworthy to unloose.

Do you know the baptism by water? You shall be baptized by fire.

Have you beheld the Lamb on the Cross? You shall behold Him

in the midst of the throne.

Have you seen the Spirit descend as a dove on one head? You shall see Him come as a fire upon an unnumbered multitude.

Have you followed the Christ to the slight booth in the Jordan Valley? You shall enter with Him into mansions of eternal glory.

Do you acknowledge Him as King of Israel? You shall hear the acclamations that salute Him as King of the worlds.

Live up to all you know, and you shall know more. Be all you can, and you shall become more. Do all that your two talents permit, and you will find yourself ruler over four cities.

June 2

John 2:10

“And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now.”

THE world gives its best first. As youth and beauty are ushered into the banqueting-room of life, the world spreads the table with its best. The zest of enjoyment is keen in those young days, but it is soon satiated; the delicacies with which the table is spread pall, and the appetite, unduly stimulated at the first, demands coarser and more passionate delights to stimulate. At last the table is served with provision, from which, in the first days, the banqueters would have turned away disgusted.

But if you let the King lead you into His banqueting house, beneath His banner of love you will find yourself feeding on dainties which never satiate nor pall—which whet the appetite and give the taste a more delicate appreciation of the vintages of heaven.

You may say this of the Word of God. At the beginning of Christian life it is full of meaning and inspiration; but as the years pass, and we realize ever more of its helpfulness, we repeat the refrain, “Thou hast kept the best until now!”

You may say this of Christian love. Let two love in Christ, and instead of their affection waning, as so often happens in the world, they will discover that the fellowship, which began in comradeship, will end in a sacramental meal; truest, purest, deepest enjoyment being kept for Paradise.

You may say it of heaven. Neither hath eye seen nor heart conceived the things, even now and here, that God has prepared for those that love Him. But so soon as the redeemed spirit shall awaken in the uncreated glory of God’s presence, it will exclaim,

“The half was never told; Thou hast kept the best until now.” At every moment and always God is giving His best.

June 3

John 3:27

“John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.”

AFTER six months of marvellous ministry, in which the Baptist

had seen the whole land at his feet, had gathered a band of disciples, and introduced the Messiah to the Jewish people, he found the crowds dwindling. His disciples viewed with feelings of chagrin the transference of popular interest from their master to Him of whom he had borne witness.

What John the Baptist meant by it: He realized that the crowds, the hushed attention, the swift response, the power of speech, the message, the deep repentance, the office of morning star heralding the Dayspring from on high, had been the gift of God. He had nothing which he had not received; he would have received nothing, except God had given it to him. Whether these things went or came was a matter altogether beyond his control. His part was to receive and use what God gave; and then return to Him, at His bidding, the saved talent. This forbade alike pride and despondency.

What we may learn by it: Humility and peace. Humility. Is this the time of your prosperity? Crowds wait on your words; mighty movements circle around you; glorious results follow on your plans! Do not be puffed up. Boast not yourself. "Who maketh thee to differ? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? but if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" Peace. If it is not due to your lethargy or sloth that the crowds have ebbed away, and that the tide of conversions has dropped below its former level, be at peace. These are things which the Holy Spirit worketh, dividing to each one severally even as He will.

June 4

John 4:10

"Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of

God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water."

THERE are wonderful contrasts here! He who gives rest sits weary on the well-head; He who was the Jews' Messiah utters His deepest lessons to a woman of Samaria; He that gives living water asks for water from the dark, cool depths that lay beneath them.

God's best things are gifts. Light, air, natural beauty, elasticity of the spirits, the sense of vigorous health, human love, and, above all, His only begotten and beloved Son. Among all other gifts is there one to be compared to this? The living spring of eternal life, which Jesus opens up in our hearts, and which so greatly differs from the pit of outward ordinance, is an altogether unspeakable bestowment. Nothing can purchase it. If a man would give all the substance of his house for it, it would be utterly contemned. It must be received as a gift, or not at all.

God's gifts must be asked for. "Thou wouldest have asked, and He would have given." This is the law of heaven. Prayer is a necessary link between the Divine hand that gives and the human heart that receives. We have not, because we ask not. There is nothing in our Lord's words of the dreamy and languid pietism which refuses to ask because it will not dictate to the perfect wisdom of God.

If we had fuller knowledge we should pray more. "If thou knewest ... thou wouldest ask." If thou knewest who He is that stands beside thee, in thy hours of private prayer—if thou knewest all the possibilities of the life of prayer—if thou knewest what gains would accrue to thee on thy knees, thou wouldest give thyself to prayer, as though it were the main object of thy life.

June 5

John 5:20

“For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.”

HEAVEN stands open to me, my Lord, in these deep and holy words. Through the open door I see the source of the golden light that shone around Thy earthly life, and detect the secret of the music that ever sounded around Thy path, as the music of the golden bells when Aaron passed to and fro.

The Father loved Thee, not only because Thou were His Son, dwelling in His bosom, but because Thou were His obedient Servant. And I would inherit a similar love; not only the love of my adoption, but of service; for Thou saidst, “If a man love Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him.”

The Father was ever showing Thee what He was doing in the unseen and eternal depths. Indeed, it seemed that Thou were+ more occupied in beholding the things which were unseen than those which were seen. Thine eye was ever on the dial-plate of eternity, and Thine ear attent to the note of the tide on its shore. Thou didst nothing that was not in the pattern shown Thee on the mount of fellowship; but whatever was wrought there Thou didst here. Teach me to live like this.

Thy Father led Thee to ever greater works. First the daughter of Jairus, then Lazarus; first the Sermon on the Mount, then the prophecies of the closing days; first the Mountain of Transfiguration, then of Ascension. So would I be led forward, from Cana to Calvary; from Bethlehem to Bethany; from Jerusalem to the uttermost part of the world. Ever greater things, because with profounder humility and deeper insight into the

meaning of Thy death. Deeper and therefore higher; nearer Thy cross, and therefore reaching further.

June

June 6

John 6:27

“Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.”

THE seal is the mark of authentication. The Book of Esther often refers to the importance of the royal seal as giving validity and authenticity to documents to which it was appended.

So at the waters of Jordan God authenticated our Lord; firstly by the voice that spoke from heaven, and secondly by the holy anointing that came upon His head, setting Him apart for holy service. What the Father did for His Son, He does for His sons.

“He that stablisheth us with you into Christ, and anointed us, is God, who also sealed us.” In other words, God waits to authenticate us to ourselves and to the world, as His beloved children, in whom He is well pleased.

The conditions of sealing: In the case of our Lord there was entire subjection to the Father’s will, although it involved His leaving the blessed home of Nazareth and identifying Himself with the sins and sorrows of men, by baptism in waters where they had confessed their sins. We, too, must be prepared to obey utterly, even to death.

The agent of sealing: The Spirit descended and abode upon Him;

He was filled with the Spirit, and returned in His power to Galilee.

We, too, are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise; who stamps us with the die of our Saviour's image and superscription.

Simultaneously with His gracious work upon us, we may detect His loving voice within us, witnessing with our spirits that we are children of God.

The effect of sealing: Secrecy, safety, and assurance. Secrecy, Song 4:12. Safety, Mat 27:65-66. Assurance, Rom 8:15, Rom 8:16, Rom 8:17. There is also a daily assimilation, though we know it not, to the glorious likeness of our Lord; so that those who see us bear witness that His name is on us.

June 7

John 7:39

“(But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)”

CALVARY must precede the Ascension, and both must come before Pentecost. The glorified Lord was the text on which the Spirit was to discourse, and the text must be complete before the sermon can commence. Moreover, it was only when our Lord had ascended to the right hand of the Father, that He could receive or transmit the Divine Comforter. It was needful for Him to be by the right hand of God exalted, before He could ask for and receive, and shed forth the Holy Spirit of promise. The one Paraclete must finish His work, and be withdrawn, ere the other could come to take up and finish His work on earth. The Son must sit down on the throne, or the Spirit could not descend to sit on

each of the disciples.

But there is a deep inner lesson for us all in these words. We sometimes wonder why we have not received the Spirit, and why our lives are not channels through which He pours in mighty rivers to make desert hearts and lives blossom and sing. How gladly would we part with all beside, if we might be conscious that not tiny streamlets, not one river of holy influence merely, but that rivers were issuing from us as the waters from the temple threshold!

Is not the reason to be sought in our neglect to glorify Christ?

We have never yet abandoned ourselves to Him, content to live the branch-life, with no other aim than to realize the one purpose of His most blessed life, the glorifying of the Father. We have never seriously made it our life-purpose to glorify the Lord Jesus. There has been no triumphal entry into our hearts, no enthronization, no challenge to the gates of our soul that they should lift themselves up to admit the King of Glory.

June 8

John 8:31

“Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;”

1. WE shall be approved as Christ’s disciples. “Then are ye truly My disciples.” Of some the Master asks, “Why call ye Me, Lord, lord, and do not the things which I say?” And He drives these from Him, saying, “I never knew you.” His words are the supreme test—the fire which detects the ore; the winnowing-fan that finds out the wheat. Our treatment of our Lord’s words discriminates

us: He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, is he that loveth Me.

2. We shall know the truth. God teaches us differently from men.

They deal in peradventures and surmises; He with certainties —“Ye shall know the truth.” They talk about the truth; He gives us the thing itself, and we know because we possess. They deal with circumstances and externals; He with the heart and root of matters.

They give to the mind and soul; He to the spirit. We know the truth, because the Truth is in us, and we are in the Truth. “We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true.”

3. We shall be free. “The truth shall make you free.” Just as we are free from the terrors which belief in witchcraft and ghosts was wont to breed, because we know that the spirits of the dead do not haunt dark and dangerous places; just as we no longer fear the fatuous light over the marsh, or the death-tick, because science has attributed these to natural causes; so, as Jesus teaches us the truth about God, and the future, and the forgiveness of sins, and the broken power of Satan, and the impotence of death, we are delivered from the bondage of fear, and walk with God in perfect peace.

March 9

John 9:4

“I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.”

IS not this exceedingly tender and beautiful? The Lord does not hesitate to describe Himself as specially designated to do a certain work. In every part of this Gospel He speaks of Himself as the sent One; but He graciously conjoins His disciples and friends in it, saying, We must work. It is as though He said, "I have a designated work which must needs be done; but I cannot do it alone. We must do it, you and I, together."

Fellowship with God the Father is the law of all industry. Every crop that goldens in the summer wind is due to the summons of the God of Nature to the husbandman, "Come and let us work together, thou and I." Every achievement in factory or mill of textile fabrics is due to the combination of the Divine laws and the human agency. We must work, is God's constant appeal.

Fellowship with the Son is the law of the Kingdom. We have been called into the fellowship or partnership of the Son of God.

He does not say, Go, but come; not, Do this, but, Let us do it. He has set His heart on the glory of the Father, and He calls us to cooperate with Him in bringing back men to God. In some way we must contribute to the final result on which Christ has set His heart.

Fellowship with the Holy Spirit is the law of all successful service. The closing words of the benediction that refer to the communion of the Holy Spirit are specially significant. "We are witnesses, and so is also the Holy Ghost." The Spirit and the Bride say Come. As Peter began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell. Oh for pure hands and a clean heart, that we may be worthy of this Divine confederacy!

June 10

John 10:41

“And many resorted unto him, and said, John did no miracle: but all things that John spake of this man were true.”

THIS is full of rare interest and beauty. John the Baptist had been dead some two years at least, and the memory of good men is apt quickly to pass from the mind of their contemporaries, especially when they are eclipsed by some greater successor. Who thinks of the morning star when the sun has risen! But as the crowds came back again on the spot so closely identified with Christ’s forerunner, he was recalled to mind; and they used of him the words ascribed to them in our text.

Your life may be without miracle. It may pass on with nothing to distinguish it above the lives of myriads around. There is no sensation-making note in your voice; no extraordinary intellectual calibre in your mind; no aptitude for wielding vast influence over the crowds. The years pass on with even monotony. Life is one dead level.

But mind you, speak true words of Jesus Christ. Point to Him and say, Behold the Lamb of God! Say of Him, This is He that baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. Announce Him as the Bridegroom, and be content to be the Bridegroom’s friend. Say that He has His winnowing-fan and axe in hand. Be careless what men think of your accent, your gestures, your way of stating the truth; but go on bearing witness to what you have known, tasted, and handled of the Word of Life.

After your death, your words may come to mind again, and be the means of bringing souls to the Lamb of God. As corn-seeds, buried in mummy-cases, now bloom on English soil, so may words be carried in the memory through long years, and bear fruit after the speaker’s death. What an epitaph for the grave of a Christian minister or teacher!

June 11

John 11:40

“Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?”

YES, we shall see the glory of God. We shall see the graves give up their dead—not only at the last day, but now. Thousands around us are dead in trespasses and sins, in which they walk according to the course of this world. Alas! more than this, they stink in the putridity of their lives and speech. Around their graves gather their friends and relatives, bathed in tears, but unable to arrest the progress of decay. But, if we will believe, we shall see the glory of God.

But how shall we believe in this? It seems easy for some to believe.

The Marys who sit at the Lord’s feet, feeding on His words, find the life and light of faith in His beloved presence. But others, like Martha, are distracted with so many things, that faith seems impossible. And this is the very point where this story is so abundantly helpful. Jesus must have the cooperation and sympathy of someone’s faith before this miracle could be wrought—and these He found, not in Mary, as we might have expected, but in Martha, the harassed housewife.

In educating Martha to this stupendous act of faith,

(1) The Lord gave her a distinct promise: “Thy brother shall rise again.”

(2) He drew her attention from Lazrus to Himself, who lay beneath and behind them: "I am the Resurrection and the Life."

(3) He forced her to confess her faith. To express it would confirm and increase it: "Believest thou this?"

(4) He compelled her to act on the faith He had created, by allowing the bystanders to remove the stone. All her soul woke up as she remarked these preparations for her brother's resurrection.

She believed; and in her faith gave the Lord the pivot on which His leverage might rest.

June 12

John 12:24

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

THE East came to the cradle; the West to the Cross. Sunrise becomes the Orient; sunset the Occident wave. These were not Hellenist Jews, but pure-blooded Greeks, whose life and philosophy were in the present, in as much joy as nature, art, and amusement could yield. It was startling to be met with the grave announcement of death. But how wise to send them to read that earliest divine book of nature. Hear the parable of the corn of wheat.

Its loneliness: Before sowing, it is by itself alone. It lies on the barn floor, beside myriads more, but there is no vital contact between it and them. They are just so many isolated units: as

foreign to each other as the stars, between which millions of dividing miles intervene. So if you save your life, nursing it in selfishness, dreading and avoiding all that savors of self-denial and self-giving, you will be utterly and drearily lonely.

The falling into the ground to die: If we compare ourselves to a corn of wheat, we may say that the seed-germ cannot bury itself; but it can choose burial. It can be willing to be cast forth. It is not a pleasant experience for the little seed. As soon as it finds itself entombed, it is seized upon by chemical agents, which pierce and tear its delicate waterproof sheath, and eat their way to its vitals.

Death is no child's play.

The fruit-bearing: Presently the rootlet shoots downward, the tiny frond upward, and, almost without knowing it, the stalk begins to blossom and bear fruit, which, with every sowing, reduplicates itself. Such may your life become, if you will let God have His way. Via Crucis, via lucis. The Way of the Cross is the Way of Light.

June

June 13

John 13:36

“Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards.”

HEAVEN desired: We often say it. When the pressure of life seems unbearable; when the door opens just wide enough to admit our dearest, and shuts before we can follow; when we want to see Him whom we love—we find ourselves using Peter’s words again: “Why not now?”

Heaven delayed: “Thou canst not follow Me now.” The emphasis is on the cannot. It is as though the Master said, “The hindrance is not in some arbitrary edict of Divine power, but in the infinite knowledge and wisdom that cannot err.” Peter was not fit to go. There were lessons of the utmost importance waiting for him to acquire in the near future. He must learn to know himself, and Christ, and the grace of the Holy Spirit. When he proudly vaunted that he would lay down his life for Jesus, he gave incontestable evidence that he did not know himself; and there was every reason to think that he was similarly deceived when he supposed that he was fit to quit earth’s discipline, and enter on heaven’s blessed enjoyment. He must exchange his own strivings and resolvings for the gracious indwelling of the Spirit of Pentecost; he must learn the glorious energy of the indwelling Saviour; he must be girded by another, and carried whither he would not; and only then would the time of his putting off of the tabernacle of

the body arrive.

Heaven guaranteed: “Thou shalt follow afterward.” There could be no doubt about it, since Jesus had said it; and often, in after days, these words must have been as a cordial, “Thou shalt follow afterward.” But what the Master said to Peter He says to each who believes, Thou shalt follow Me afterward, “unto fountains of waters of life.”

June 14

John 14:1

“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.”

WERE we less familiar with these words, we should be more startled by their immeasurable meaning. One who seems a man asks all men to give Him precisely the same faith and confidence that they give to God. He would not abate His claims, though He was the humblest and meekest of men. And the irresistible conclusion is forced on us, that He was and knew Himself to be “God manifest in the flesh.”

1. Faith in Jesus is the cure of heart trouble. It is of little use to say, “Let not your heart be troubled,” unless you can add “Trust Christ.” Only if we can trust can we be still. Only if we can shift the responsibility of our life on the care of our never-failing Redeemer can weeping be exchanged for radiant and unspeakable joy.

2. Faith in Jesus conducts to the knowledge of God. “Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me.” Philip said,

“Show us the Father.” Jesus answered, “Believe, and thou dost behold.” The world says, Seeing is believing; Jesus says, Believing is seeing. The true way to know God is, not by arguing about or seeking to verify His existence by intellectual processes, but by obeying the precepts of Jesus; following the footsteps of Jesus; holding fellowship with Jesus.

3. Faith in Jesus will make our lives the channel through which He can work. “He that believeth on Me, the works,” etc. (John 14:12-14). The Gospels are included in the one clause; the Acts and all the marvels of the following ages in the other. Jesus is always the worker; and the man who yields himself most utterly to Him in obedience and faith, will become the channel through which He will work most mightily.

June 15

John 15:4

“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.”

THE unity between the Lord and His members is beautifully set forth in this exquisite parable; which was perhaps suggested by the swaying of a vine in the evening air, as they essayed to go from the upper room toward Gethsemane. In certain conservatories the plant branches are trained along roof or wall for vast distances; yet one life pervades the whole plant, from the rugged root to the furthest twig and leaf and cluster. Thus there is one holy life pervading all who have belonged, or shall belong, to Jesus. They live because He lives. His life is theirs.

We are in Christ by grace; but we need to realize and accentuate

the union by meditation and prayer. We need to

•

wait more absolutely for His impulses in intercession and action.

•

be silent for Him to speak.

•

draw on Him by the constant appeal of faith, which becomes as natural as breathing.

•

look away to Him for His commendation.

•

seek only His verdict on what may have been said and done.

•

be so closely joined to Him, that He may produce in and through us whatever fruit He will for the refreshment of men and the glory of God.

We are in Christ forever, so far as our standing is concerned; but we may be “taken away,” so far as our opportunities of ministry are concerned. How many of us have failed to be what He desired, so that He has had to bestow elsewhere the luxury of ministering to Him!

We are in Christ, not because we hold Him, but because He holds us; therefore we must expect the Father’s pruning. Yet do not

dread the knife. It is His Word, wielded by a Father's hand; and if we will yield to the golden pruning knife of the Word, we shall escape the iron one of sorrow.

June 16

John 16:23-26

“And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.

Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father. At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you:”

THRICE in these closing words the Master refers to that day (see John 14:20). Without doubt He refers to the Day of Pentecost, and the era it would introduce.

The Holy Spirit reveals the relation between the Father and the Son (John 14:20). And this not as a matter of speculation merely, but for our holy living. The model of our union with Jesus is His union with the Father. As He is in His Father in perpetual and most blessed union, so are we to be in Him.

The Holy Spirit's presence answers our questions. “Ye shall ask Me nothing” (John 16:23). Whilst the Lord was with them, they were constantly breaking in on Him with their questions: “Lord, are there few that be saved?” “Wilt Thou at this time restore the kingdom?”

“When shall these things be?” This is always the symptom of the earliest stage of the religious life—perpetual questioning and worrying. But when the Spirit comes, His presence is the sufficient answer. He does not teach our intellects to know the truth, but gives the truth to our hearts. We need not question, because we see; we possess; we can taste and handle for ourselves.

The Holy Spirit’s indwelling teaches us how to pray. “In that day, ye shall ask in My name” (John 16:26). To pray in Christ’s name is to let His nature pray in and through our lips. Of course such prayer prevails.

The one condition of successful prayer is to bring yourself into a line with the thoughts of God, to breathe His spirit, to be swayed by His impulses; this is only possible through the gracious operation of the Spirit of God. Has the blessed Day of Pentecost broken upon you? Do you live in its light? Have you received all it was meant to bring you?

June 17

John 17:1

“These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:”

IN one form or another we are constantly asking the Father to glorify us. Glorify me, O Father, we cry, by giving me the largest congregation in the town; by commencing a great revival in my mission, by increasing my spiritual power, so that I shall be greatly sought after. Of course, we do not state our reasons quite

so concisely; but this is really what we mean. And then we wonder why the answer tarries. Is it not because our Father dare not trust us with glory? He knows that we would become proud and self-conscious; that we would ascribe our success to the strength of our arm and the swiftness of our foot. Nothing would be more harmful to our Christian growth. But when we desire glory only that we may be able better to glorify Jesus, then there will be no stint in what He will confer on us. Glory, like a golden river, will pour into our hearts and lives.

Oh for this absorbing passion for the glory of Jesus! To be able to pray “Thy kingdom come,” without reference to our share in securing its advent. To be as glad when another scores a great success, as though it had been ourselves who had won the laurels.

To pray as eagerly for the success of others as of ourselves. Here is an ideal which seems inaccessible, as it ridicules all our natural attempts to win it. To be pleased to suffer, to fail, to be counted nothing and nobody, if only our dear Lord is extolled, exalted, and made very high—is this possible?

Do you choose it? Then be of good cheer. This is the hunger which God has promised to satisfy. He never shows you your lack of a grace without pledging Himself thereby to realize it for you.

Yes, this blessed experience shall come even to you. You shall be taught the blessed lesson of perfect love.

June 18

John 18:36

“Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.”

WELL might Pilate ask if Jesus was a king. Thou poor, weary, rejected Nazarene, art Thou a king? A strange contrast, surely, to the Herod that built those halls of judgment! Thy people, at least, fail to recognize Thy royalty! But Jesus did not abate His claims. “Thou sayest that I am,” He answered, “a king.” And as the ages have passed they have substantiated His claim.

The origin of His kingdom—“My kingdom is not of this world.”

The Lord did not mean, as His words have been too often interpreted, that His kingdom had nothing to do with this world; but that it did not originate here. The “of” means out of. Jesus is King, not by earthly descent, or human right, but by the purpose and counsel of the Father, who said, “Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee: yet will I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion.”

The method of its promulgation—It is not spread by armed force. His servants do not fight. They are priests clad in the white robes of immaculate purity, and bearing aloft their banner with the inscription, “Blessed are the peacemakers.” Like their Master, they bear witness to the truth; and as they do so those who are of the truth are attracted to the Lord as steel filings to the magnet.

There is true royalty in bearing witness to the Truth. Humbly we may appropriate our Master’s words: to this end were we born, and of this cause are we left in the world, that in every act and word we might bear witness to the Truth. As we do so, we manifest a royalty which is not of human gift or descent, but which has been communicated by the reception of the Christ-nature, through the regenerating grace of the Holy Ghost.

June 19

John 19:30

“When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.”

COMPARING the Gospels, we discover that these words were said “with a loud voice.” It was the shout of a conqueror, who has fought through a long and terrible day, but greets victory as evening closes in.

Finished, the long line of sacrificial rite: From the gates of Eden the blood of sacrifice had begun to flow, augmented by the confluent streams of the years. From that moment, however, not another drop need be shed. The types were finished now that the Antitype had been realized.

Finished, His fulfilment of prophecy: How contradictory some had seemed! Ancient of Days, yet a babe; the Mighty God, yet marred of visage, and led to the slaughter; Son of Man, yet scion of David’s stock; ruling in the midst of enemies, yet a bruised and broken Sufferer. But all of them, even to the last pathetic intimation of His dying thirst, fulfilled.

Finished, His mortal life: Never again to be weary, hungered, tempted, buffeted, or to bear the contradiction of sinners. Never again to sweat the bloody sweat, or bear the accumulated faults of men. Nevermore to die.

Finished, a world’s redemption: He had wrought out and brought in a perfect salvation. The world, so far as God could make it so,

was already reconciled. Sin was put away.

Finished, the perfect obedience: He alone of all born of woman was able to say that there was nothing which the Father had asked that He had not given; nothing that the Father had imposed that He had not gladly borne. He had finished the work given Him to do.

June

June 20

John 20:16

“Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.”

MANY had called her by that name. She had been wont to hear it many times a day from many lips; but only One had spoken it with that intonation. In His mouth its familiar syllables had a sweetness and tenderness which lingered in her heart; as the fragrance of the Roumanian rose valley clings for many a day to the clothes of those who have entered it.

Her eyes had deceived her. Startled by the sudden glad expression which had passed over the features of the angels, who sat sentry in the sepulchre, she had turned herself back to see the source from which the radiance had gleamed; but even with that hint to help her, she had failed to recognize her Lord. But her ear could not mistake; the voice carried immediate recognition.

We sigh sometimes for “the touch of a vanished hand, and the sound of a voice that is still”; but we shall hear those voices again.

Our mortal body is to be fashioned according to the body of Christ’s resurrection; and evidently in that body there were the old familiar tones. May we not, therefore, certainly infer that the voices which welcome us on the other side will be those that

hushed us with their lullabies when we were babes: asked us for our love and assured us of theirs when we attained maturity; whispered their dying messages in our ears, and sent us their Godspeed as we went down into the river?

The Master knows our names, and calls His own followers by them. There is one response, which He waits to elicit, one which alone will satisfy Him; one in which the love and devotion of a life may be summed up. Like Mary, let us turn and say to Him: Rabboni! that is, Master!

June 21

John 21:7

“Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher’s coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea.”

THIS miracle was also a parable. When we go fishing apart from Jesus, we may indeed toil all the night and take nothing.

But when through the darkness Jesus comes, and speaks to us across the wave, and tells us where to let down the nets; when we are in blessed partnership with Himself; when, though we see Him not, we obey His slightest promptings—then the nets are filled to their uttermost.

Those who are loved, love: It was the consciousness that Jesus loved him which made John the Apostle of Love. Love casts such a wondrous spell over its objects, that they begin to shine in its rays and reflect them. Nothing will make a coal glow with heat but to plunge it into the heart of the fire. Do you want to love

the Lord Jesus?—dwell on His love to you.

Those who love Christ see Him: Not Peter, the man of eager action, but John, the man of devoted love, saw the Master amid the haze that lay on the lake shore. Love will penetrate every disguise; will detect Him by the slightest sign; will strip from our eyes the film that sense and sin draw over them. If you loved Him more, you would see His hand in that disappointment, that crushing sorrow.

Those who seek Christ cannot keep it to themselves: They must tell it out to their next companion, with beating heart and thrilling speech. John said unto Peter, It is the Lord. How often has the affirmation of a pensive, quiet heart been the torch to ignite all the soul of another, who was more fitted to execute than plan? Is not this what we may all experience as we draw near to eternity? Shall we not see Jesus standing on the shore, with preparations beyond all thought, to welcome us as we arrive from the night cruise

June 22

Matthew 1:21

“And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.”

THIS is the mission of Immanuel. He came, not as the Jews expected, to break the yoke of Caesar and re-establish the kingdom of David; but to break the yoke of sin, and set up the sinless kingdom of God. The Church has too often misunderstood the object of His advent, as though He meant simply to save from the consequences and results of sin. This

were too limited a programme for the Son of God. To cancel the results and leave the bitter cause; to deliver from the penalty, but not from the power; to rescue His people from the grasp of a broken law, but confess Himself unable to deal with the bad virus of the blood—this were to fail. No; dare to take this announcement in its full and glorious meaning, written as it is on the portico of our Saviour's life.

What an admixture of blood flowed through His veins! Let your eyes glance through the list of His genealogy. Men and women, notorious for their evil character, lie in the direct line of His descent. This was permitted, that He might fully represent our fallen race; that no sinner, however bad, should be abashed to claim His help; and that it should be clearly shown how powerless sin was to tarnish or taint the holiness of His sinless nature. Made in the likeness of sinful flesh, He knew no sin. The germs of corruption could find no welcome in His heart.

Art thou one of His people? Hast thou accepted His rule, and allied thyself with Him? For if so, He shall save thee. Though possessed with seven devils, He will drive them out.

June 23

Matthew 2:11

“And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.”

GOLD is for the king. It is meet that Matthew should tell this story: for his is pre-eminently the royal Gospel. Long before the Lord was born, these Eastern sages must have been started on

their way, whither and to worship whom they knew not: but an ancient prophecy had foretold that to this babe should be offered of the gold of Sheba, and that kings should bring Him the riches of the Gentiles.

How useful this gold was to Joseph in the following months! It helped him to defray the cost of the journey into Egypt and back, and to maintain his precious charges there. The Heavenly Father knew what those needs would be, and met them by anticipation. If you concern yourself in the affairs of His kingdom, and will obey the warnings and directions He gives; if you dare to step out on the path of literal obedience—you will find that God will become responsible and defray all costs. Gold is naught to Him. He can make it out of common dust by a word.

It is sweet to think of all the gold presented to Jesus in after ages. The wealth of the rich, the golden ornaments taken from the person, the tiny pieces of gold which represent the patient savings of the poor—all these have made up the flowing river of which those golden gifts of the Magi were the first trickling drops. Have you given gold to Him, you who know Him, not as the babe only, but as the Man of the Cross; not as man merely, but as the Son of the Highest? You may have given Him copper in abundance, and silver in handfuls; but let your future gifts to Him be of the best.

Or, if poverty restrains you, let the philosopher's stone of Love turn the meaner metals to gold.

June 24

Matthew 3:1

“In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the

wilderness of Judaea,”

THE Evangelist is fond of the present tense, “cometh.” Yes, these records are true for all time. You tell me that they happened nineteen centuries ago. Certainly; but they happened yesterday, and are happening today. Remember that He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He was, and is, and is to come. Christ was born into the world, but He is always being born into the hearts of men in Regeneration. John preceded and announced His advent in the wilderness of Judaea; and He is always preparing His way into the hearts and lives of men. It is doubtful whether Jesus ever comes into the heart of mature manhood without the previous work of a John the Baptist. Of days of conviction of sin, of remorse, of repentance, we may truly say, “In those days cometh John the Baptist.”

John the Baptist is sadly needed today. Much of what we call Christianity is but Christianized heathenism. It glozes over covetousness, luxurious self-indulgence, compliance with fashion and worldliness; it admits into its high places men who thrive on the oppression of the poor; it condones the oppression of the native races, the sale of opium and spirits, the shameless traffic in impurity; it rears the ideals of the world in the place of the changeless cross of the slain Christ with its divine sorrow and blood. Ah, we need that John the Baptist should come with his stern words about the axe, the winnowing-fan, and the fire.

Nothing less will avail to prepare the way for a new coming of Christ.

Each age has had its John the Baptist. Now St. Bernard; now Savonarola; now John Knox. With sonorous, ringing voice the herald has prepared the way of the King: “He cometh to judge the world!”

June 25

Matthew 4:1

“Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil.”

YESTERDAY, the open heavens; today, the burning cinders of the wilderness of temptation. Then the voice of the Father owning Him as the Well-beloved; now the hiss of the tempter. Then the teeming crowds; now the desert solitude and silence, broken only by the cry of the wild beast. Then the Spirit as a nesting dove, but now as a compelling force. Wherever there is the Christ-life, it passes through these same experiences. The Holy Spirit often anticipates coming trial by granting some great revelation of God; but He who gives the one leads into the other, that the precious bestowments of God’s grace may be rendered permanent.

Would you give the bread of life to thousands? You must refuse to use your opportunity to make bread for your own gratification.

You cannot use your power for others and for yourself. If you elect to use it for them, you must be content to wait till the Father sends His angels to minister to you. In the meanwhile live by faith on His words.

Would you teach the magnificence of a faith that can trust God to preserve it, though it steps from the mountain brow on to thin air? You must refuse to use it for purposes of ostentation; and wait till God, not Satan, calls.

Would you win the kingdoms of the world? You must obtain them, not by methods which commend themselves to human prudence, but through the death on the cross and the falling into the ground to die. There are two mountains in the Gospel: this,

as it opens; that of the Ascension at its close. The valley of death lies between. But the traversing of this valley was necessary, ere Christ could say, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth."

June 26

Matthew 5:45

"That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."

WE are made sons by regeneration, through faith in the Son; but we are called to make our calling and election sure—to approve and vindicate our right to that sacred name. We can only do this by showing in word and act that the Divine life and principles animate us.

Jesus teaches that the life of God in the hearts of His children will show itself in pure and unaffected love. He says in effect,

"God is good: God forgives: God bears with wrong and sin: God loves those who hate Him, blesses those who curse, bestows His favours on the false and unjust, suffers long and is kind; believes, hopes, bears all things. Therefore, if you are His children, do as He does, as I do: follow Me: live as I live: become as a bird, a lily, a little child: be pure, merciful, lowly, gentle, strong in righteousness—and you will be called the sons of God; yours will be the kingdom of heaven."

There were several things the Lord could not say fully in this opening statement. That obedience to His precepts would inevitably conduct them to a cross; that the strength for such a

life could only be secured through the coming of the Comforter; that the progress of the Kingdom would be slow and arduous—these things were for the time veiled and hidden. But His main object was to teach that Christianity must be a life after the model of God's. Christian disciple, art thou living this life? Not by a creed, a ritual, a profession; but by living the life, is thy true nature discerned, whether thou art wheat or tare, child or hypocrite.

Sometimes we are called to be as the sun, ripening souls by our genial love; at other times we refresh them as rain watering the grass.

June 27

Matthew 6:18

“That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.”

HOW fondly Jesus repeats these words (Matthew 6:4, 6, 18).

Though compelled to live so much in the public gaze of men, His heart was always sighing for the secret place of fellowship with His Father, who waited for Him there.

Of course, the main object of these paragraphs was to withdraw His disciples from the excessive outwardness of the age in which He spoke, and which necessarily detracted from the singleness, directness, and simplicity of the religious life. It is impossible to perform our religious duties before men, without insensibly considering what impression we are producing, and how far their estimation of us is being enhanced. And in so far as we seek

these things, the stream is contaminated with mud and silt, and becomes turbid. We have just as much religious life as we show to God in secret—just that, no less, no more. Whatever is not wrought between thee and God, with no record but His eye, is chaff which the wind driveth away.

Here is a test for our alms, our prayers, and our fasting from sin and self-indulgence. If we do any of these to maintain or increase the consideration that men have of us, they count for nothing in the eye of God. But whatever is done for Him alone will secure His inevitable notice and reward. Dwell on that very definite assurance:

“Shall recompense thee.” There is no doubt about it. For every petition breathed into His ear; for every sigh and tear; for every abstinence from sin and self—there will be a certain recompense, after the Divine measure. Such seeds shall have a prolific harvest.

Seek then the secret place; where prying eyes cannot follow, and curious ears cannot overhear.

June 28

Matthew 7:2

“For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.”

THIS is an invariable principle. Christ did not make it true by saying it; He said it because it was true. There are at least three policies of life—that of the churl, who never gives unless he is compelled; of the niggard, who metes out from the tiniest measure on which he can lay hands; of the bountiful man, who is

ever meting out his stores with lavish hand. If he gives, it is to his uttermost; if he loves, it is with all his heart; if he forgives, he crowns the forgiven one with loving kindness; if he puts his hand to constructing aught, every part of it bears trace of the wealth of his taste, and gift, and self-sacrifice.

It might be supposed that such a policy would lead to bankruptcy of resources and speedy impoverishment; and for fear of this most refrain from adopting it. They either do not give, or give stintingly and fearfully. But the remarkable fact is, that when a man is using this large measure toward others, they catch it up and fill it with their bountifulness toward him. They mete out their love and gifts according to the measure of his giving. This is an invariable principle: begin serving men with a miser's hand, and they will do the same to you; begin, on the contrary, by serving men without stint, and they will do the same to you.

Live a royal life, child of God, as becomes such a Father. Give, expecting nothing again, with full measure, pressed down, and running over. Give, not so much money, as love, and tenderness, and human sympathy: give as one who is always receiving from the boundless resources of God. And, provided always that thy motives are pure, it will come back to thee. God will see thee bountifully rewarded.

June 29

Matthew 8:9

“For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.”

THE centurion's faith set Christ marvelling. First, because it was

found in such an unlikely place. Here was a Gentile who had come from the West, and was sitting down with Abraham in the Kingdom of God. Secondly, because of its greatness: “I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.”

This Roman officer applied to our Lord principles with which he was cognizant through his connection with the army. He knew that he had no power over other men in his individual capacity, or apart from his organic connection with the machinery of government. If he said to one man Come; to another Go; to his servant Do this, and his command was immediately obeyed—it was entirely due to his own obedience, in turn, to the authority which was over himself. So long as he obeyed that authority, he represented it; and it passed through him to compel obedience to his commands. This is the principle he applied to our Lord.

He recognized that Jesus of Nazareth was always acting under the authority of His Heavenly Father, and he inferred, therefore, that He could wield the power of God as he could that of Rome. As the authority of the Caesars flowed through his own yielded life, so the authority of God over diseases, demons, and all else, would flow through Christ's.

What a profound principle is here! Learn to obey, and you shall rule. Yield yourself absolutely to God, and God's power shall pass through your heart and life. Be under Divine authority, and you shall be able to say, Go, come, do this. All things serve the man who serves Jesus Christ. Absolute consecration to God, as a soldier is surrendered to his country, is the condition of power.

June 30

Matthew 9:22

“But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour.”

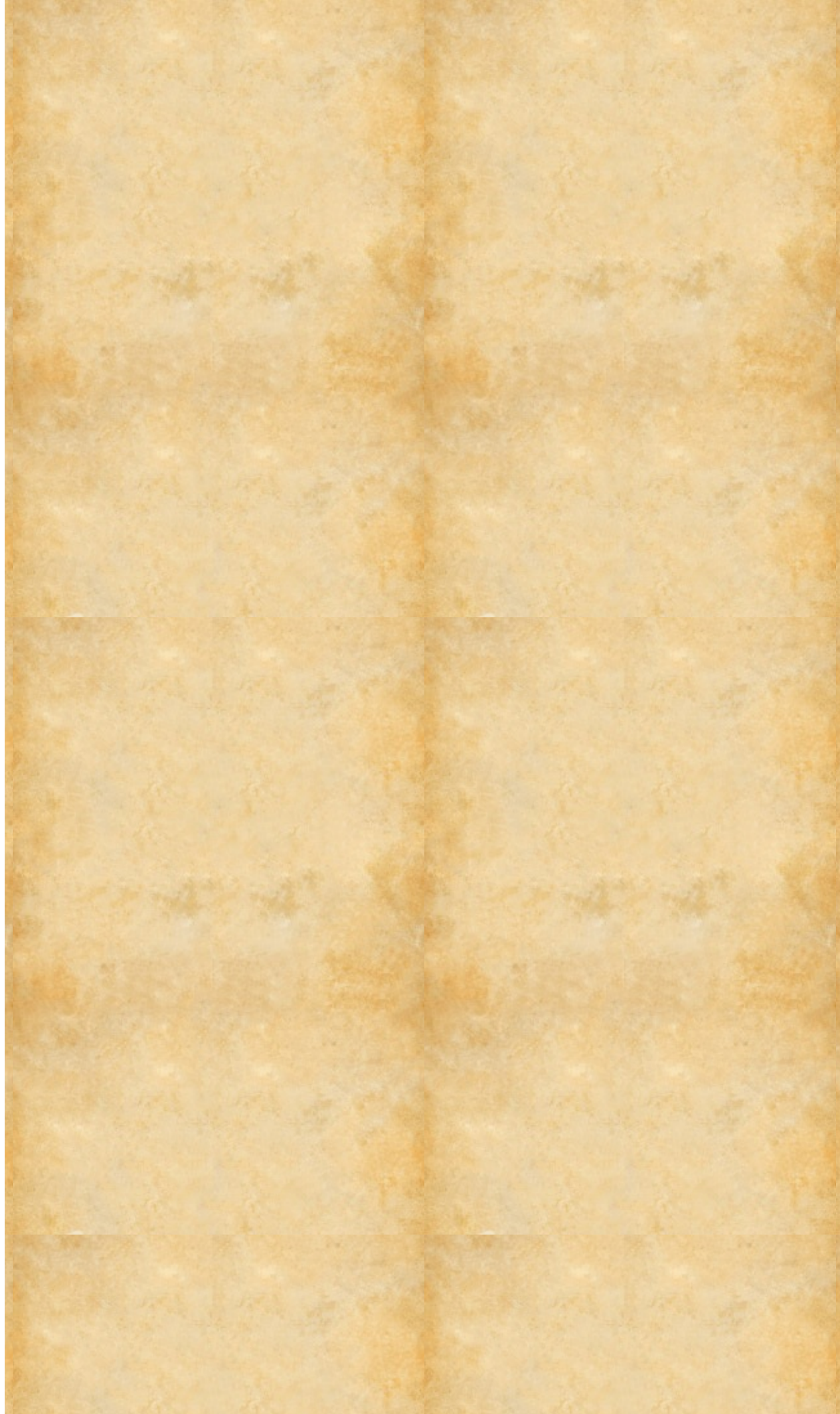
WHOLENESS and holiness are identical: the one of the body; the other of the soul. They are closely related to the word Health, and all may be procured through faith. Holiness, wholeness of heart, health—and all by faith. There are three steps to this blessed state—of wholeness of soul.

First, we must believe that it is attainable. For we never feel morally bound to do, attempt, or choose, what we do not believe to be within our reach. But all questions on the matter are settled forevermore by such words as, “Be ye holy, for I am holy”; and

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.”

Second, we must consecrate ourselves to God. In other words, by the help of the Holy Spirit, we must determine and resolve that we will be wholly the Lord's. We must come to a fixed resolve to break off from every known sin; to walk, so far as we know them, in the way of God's commandments; to be and do and suffer all His righteous will. This must be our deliberate resolve for all coming time; and if we are unable to make the resolve, through the frailty of our nature and the strength of our old sins, we must at least tell God that we are willing for this to become our unvacillating attitude.

Third, we must believe, absolutely, that God does accept the consecration we have made, and will do all that He has promised, by infilling us with His Holy Spirit, and working in us that which is pleasing in His sight. Nay, we must not only believe that He will do it, we must ask and claim that He should do it; we must, like this woman, touch Christ and obtain His healing virtue.

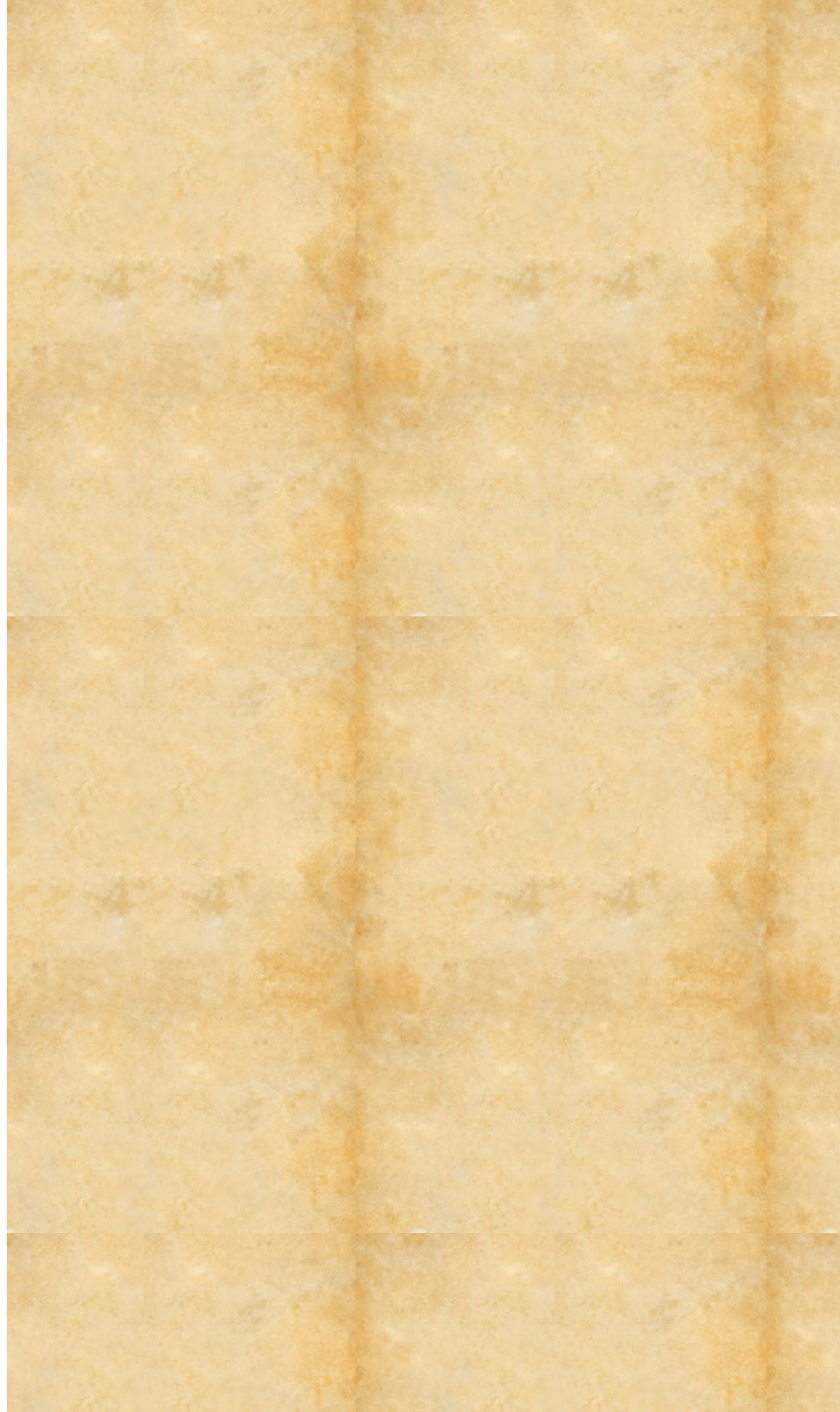


Our Daily Homily

By

F.B. Meyer

1. **July 1st through 10th**
2. **July 11th through 17th**
3. **July 18th through 24th**
4. **July 25th through 31th**



July

July 1

Matthew 10:27

“What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops.”

THESE striking words are applicable to us all. Our Lord is constantly taking us into the dark, that He may tell us things.

Into the dark of the shadowed home, where bereavement has drawn down the blinds; into the dark of the lonely, desolate life, where some infirmity closes us in from the light and stir of life; into the dark of some crushing sorrow and disappointment. Then He tells us His secrets, great and wonderful, eternal and infinite. The eye, which has become dazzled by the glare of earth, becomes able to behold the heavenly constellations; and the ear to detect the undertones of His voice, which is often drowned amid the tumult of earth's strident cries.

But such revelations always imply a corresponding responsibility—that speak ye in the light—that proclaim upon the house-tops. We are not meant to linger always in the dark, or stay in the closet; presently we shall be summoned to take our place in the rush and storm of life; and when that moment comes, we are to speak and proclaim what we have learned.

This gives a new meaning to suffering, the saddest element in which is often its apparent aimlessness. “How useless I am.”

“What am I doing for the betterment of men?” “Wherefore this waste of the precious spikenard of my soul.” Such are the desperate laments of the sufferer. But God has a purpose in it all. He has withdrawn His child to the higher altitudes of fellowship, that he may hear God speaking face to face, and bear the message to his fellows at the mountain foot. Were the forty days wasted that Moses spent on the Mount, or the period spent at Horeb by Elijah, or the years spent in Arabia by Paul?

July 2

Matthew 11:6

“And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.”

A FRIEND has turned these words into another beatitude—The blessedness of the unoffended. The Baptist was tempted to take offence with Christ, first, because of His long delay in asserting Himself as the promised Messiah; and second, because of His apparent indifference to His own welfare. “If He be all that I expected, why does He leave me in this sad plight, extending to me no word of comfort; making no attempt to free me from these dark, damp cells.”

Are there not such hours in our lives still? We say, If He really loves us and is entrusted with all power, why does He not deliver us from this difficult and irksome condition? Why does He not hurl these prison walls to the ground? Why does He not vindicate and bring me out to the light of life and joy?

But the Lord made no attempt to emancipate His servant; and He seems to be unmindful of our sore straits. All He did for John was to send him materials on which his faith should feed, and rise to a stronger, nobler growth. “Go back,” He said in effect to

John, “tell him what I can do; he is not mistaken—I have all power, I am the expected King; and if I do not come to his help in the way he expects, it is not through lack of power and willingness, but because of reasons of Divine policy and government, to which I must be true. Tell him to trust Me, though I do not deliver him.

Assure him of the blessedness which must accrue to those who are not offended at My apparent neglect. I will explain all to him some day.” Thus He speaks still. He does not attempt to apologize, or to explain—He only asks our trust; and promises blessedness to those who do not stumble at life’s mysteries.

July 3

Matthew 12:5-7

“Or have ye not read in the law, how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless? But I say unto you, That in this place is one greater than the temple. But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.”

THE Pharisees were great sticklers for rites and ceremonies.

Their religion consisted in little else than a perpetual round of outward observances. They believed that they were thus observing and maintaining the ancient Mosaic code. In their judgment, great human necessities, like hunger, must be subordinate to their minute exactions. Our Lord, on the other hand, claimed that the laws of God, as written in the nature of

man, must have a priority over mere ceremonial enactments. And He showed that His contention was supported by those Scriptures on which they rested their case.

There are two ways of studying Scripture. The one deals with its letter; the other compares Scripture with Scripture, and seeks to fathom its profound and eternal meaning. Do not read as the scribe, but as the Son of Man. Do not rest in the outward rite, but in the spiritual attitude of which the rite was intended to be the expression. Everywhere there is One greater than the Temple; greater than the rigorous exactions of the Jewish Sabbath; greater than the code on which Pharisaism insisted.

All through the Old Testament you may detect the spirit of the New; the mercy in which God delights, the pitiful appreciation of the frailty and hunger of the nature He has made. The New Testament is in accord with the Old of Scripture, and the older Testament of man's nature, as God made it at first.

It is highly important to remember this. The God who redeems is He who created all things by His word, and for His pleasure. Is it likely that He will contradict His original design, and undo what cost Him thought and care? Surely not; He is pledged only to undo the evil which has marred His work.

July 4

Matthew 13:11

“He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.”

IN explanation of this statement, our Lord reiterates His favourite

saying: "Whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have abundance." His disciples had already given heed to His words. On the thin soil of their hearts the precious seed had already begun to germinate: and as it throve, it prepared the way for more and more to follow.

In the case of the crowds that pressed around Him, however, there was no such earnest giving heed. They were content with the interest, the beauty and grace, of His nature-teaching, without a thought of its deeper aspects. Hearing, they did not understand; seeing, they did not perceive; face to face with Incarnate Truth, they thought only that He had a pleasant voice, and could play skilfully on the harp.

First, Understand what you hear. Do not be content to have a merely intellectual appreciation of its force or beauty; but open your heart to meditate and ponder it. It is only thus that truth really strikes its roots into the soul, and defies the birds.

Second, Beware of the response of mere emotion. Too many of these receive the word with joy. Their expressions of interest and pleasure are loud and emphatic. Tears course down their cheeks.

You think them most hopeful. But it passes like the sunshine and cloud of an April day.

Third, Guard against cares and worldly success. The first, of the poor; the second, of the rich. There is not room in the heart, or nutrition in the soul, for the absorbing pursuit of both earth and heaven, of time and eternity.

Fourth, Practice what you hear. Remember that not the hearers of the Word, but the doers of the work, are blessed.

July 5

Matthew 14:19

“And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.”

STONEWALL Jackson was once asked what he meant when he used the expression, “Instant in prayer.” “I will give you,” he said, “my idea of it for illustration, if you will allow it, and not think that I am setting myself up as a model for others.” On being assured that there would be no misjudgement, he went on to say: “I have so fixed the habit in my own mind, that I never raise a glass of water to my lips without a moment’s asking of God’s blessing. I never seal a letter without putting a word of prayer under the seal. I never take a letter from the post without a brief sending of my thoughts heavenward. I never change my classes in the section room without a minute’s petition on the cadets who go out and those who come in.” “And don’t you sometimes forget this?” “I think I can say that I scarcely do; the habit has become almost as fixed as breathing.”

And if this was the habit of the servant, how much more of the Master. Frequently, in the Gospels, we are told of His heavenward look. It was as though He were always looking up for His Father’s smile, direction, and benediction; so that He could be assured that what He was engaged in was in the line of His Father’s purpose, and that He might gain the needed power to act and wisdom to speak.

It is only thus that we shall be able to meet the hunger of our times. Our slender stores will not avail for so great a multitude. But if we bring them to Him, and place them in His hands, and look up to heaven for His enablement, we shall break and break again till all have sufficed and left. But this habit can only be maintained by those who go into the mountain of prolonged

fellowship.

July 6

Matthew 15:28

“Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.”

THIS was a remarkable permission. It is not often that Christ takes the key to His stores out of the bunch which hangs at His girdle, and entrusts it to a soul, saying in effect, Take what you will. “Of the work of My hands, command ye Me.”

1. We must intercede for others. This woman came for her child.

We must always be on our guard when we ask much for self, lest somehow our requests be prompted by self-aggrandizement. If we do ask for power, wisdom, or likeness to Christ, let it be that we may help others better. The apostle says that Christ “washed us from our sins... and hath made us kings and priests” (Revelation 1:5, 6). We all need this washing, that we may become intercessors.

2. We must accord Christ His right place. The Canaanitish woman came to Him as the Son of David, and He answered her not a word. She had no claim on Him as such. That He was the Jews’

Messiah could not help her. She had given Him that title by courtesy and hearsay. It was necessary that by His silence she should be driven to find Him for herself. When she gave Him a universal title, and said, Lord, help me! worshipping at His feet,

she was a step nearer the goal.

3. We must answer His affirmations with Yea. He told her what she was. She was an alien and outcast. She was not part of the chosen family; she must understand her true position, and take it.

And she did. She said, Yea, Lord. If you can perfectly accept God's will, so that it shall take the place of your own; if you will take your place among the clogs beneath the table, you are sure to obtain answers to your prayers—God can let you have your way, because it will be His.

July 7

Matthew 16:22

“Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.”

THROUGHOUT His life these words were perpetually flung at the heart of Christ. Spare Thyself this hunger, the devil said in the wilderness, on the threshold of His public ministry; spare Thyself this agonizing death, he said again in the garden, on the eve of the crucifixion.

It is noticeable that the cross was surrounded by voices that repeated the same words. They that passed by it wagged their heads, and said “Thou that destroyest the temple and buildest it in three days, save Thyself.” the chief priests mocked Him, with the scribes and elders, and said, “Can He not save Himself?” The soldiers also mocked Him, coming to Him, offering Him vinegar, and saying, “If Thou art the King of the Jews, save Thyself.” And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on Him, saying,

“Art not Thou the Christ? save Thyself and us.” All these voices spoke after the methods of human wisdom.

This made our Lord turn so quickly on Peter, saying, “Get thee behind Me, Satan: thou art a stumbling-block unto Me.” How often are the same words addressed to us: “Pity thyself. Have mercy on your sensitive human nature; do not be too lavish with your money; give yourself a little more license.” But it cannot be. You cannot save others and yourself as well. Those that would follow Jesus in His steps of redemptive help to mankind must deny themselves, take up the cross, and follow Him into rejection, shame, spitting, and the grave. They who have mercy on themselves will never show much to others, or receive much; but the merciful are blessed, because they obtain mercy. Thus mercy is “twice blessed; it blesses him that gives, and him that takes.”

July 8

Matthew 17:3

“And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.”

LUKE tells us that they “spoke of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem.” Moses, as representing the Law, would remind Him that if as God’s Lamb He must die, yet as God’s Lamb He would redeem countless myriads. Elijah, as representative of the prophets, would dwell on the glory that would accrue to the Father. These thoughts were familiar enough to the mind of our blessed Master; yet they must have gladdened and strengthened Him, as they fell from other lips: the more so when they conversed together on the certain splendour of the

resurrection morning that should follow His decease.

And where could there have been found greater subjects than this wondrous death, and His glorious resurrection? Here the attributes of God find their most complete and most harmonious exemplification. Here the problems of human sin and salvation are met and solved. Here the travail of Creation meets with its answer and key. Here are sown the seeds of the new heavens and earth, in which shall dwell righteousness and peace. Here is the point of unity between all ages, all dispensations, all beings, all worlds.

Here blend men and angels; departed spirits and the denizens of other spheres; Peter, James and John, with Moses and Elijah, and all with the great God Himself, whose voice is heard falling in benediction from the opened heaven.

We, too, must often climb the mount of transfiguration in holy reverie; for the nearer we get to the Cross, and the more we meditate upon the decease accomplished at Jerusalem, the closer we shall come into the centre of things; the deeper will be our harmony with ourselves and all other noble spirits and with God Himself.

July 9

Matthew 18:15

“Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.”

“WHERE is thy brother, child?”

“I do not know, Lord; I have not seen or spoken to him these many days; and, as far as I am concerned, I would not mind if I never saw him again; he is as good as lost to me.”

“Hast thou wronged him, that this gulf has yawned between you? Remember that I said, if on coming to the altar, thou shouldest remember that thy brother hath some complaint against thee, thou wert to leave thy gift, and seek to be reconciled; then return to offer thy gift.”

“Yes, Lord, I remember well. But that is not the case now; my brother has nothing against me; he is in the wrong, not I; he has trespassed against me, not I against him. It is therefore for him to come to me, not for me to go to him.”

“Is it likely that he will come to thee?”

“I do not think it is, Lord. He is not one of Thy disciples; and it is most unlikely that he will ever cross my threshold to apologize and ask forgiveness.”

“Then thou must go to him, and tell him his fault between thee and him alone, and do thy best to win him back.”

“But I think he is most likely to put the wrong construction on my going, and to account that I feel myself in the wrong.”

“Thou art thy brother’s keeper, and thou must win him out of his fault, and lovelessness, and wandering. He is drifting away—not from thee only, but from Me. I know he was in the wrong at first; but thou art in the wrong now, and thou must go and tell him his fault, and try to wash his feet and win him back.”

July 10

Matthew 19:8

“He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.”

THIS is a very profound principle, which is of immense value in dealing with Scripture. There were certain precepts and commands given to Israel, which are not of lasting obligation, because they were stages in their moral discipline and education. It would have been impossible to lift them suddenly from the degradation into which they had sunk in Egypt, to the glorious levels of Isaiah or the Sermon on the Mount: so God’s dealings with them were graduated and progressive.

Such were the regulations about a plurality of wives, the keeping of bond-slaves, the treatment of captives, the destruction of their foes. With respect to these, our Lord says, Moses interposed a parenthesis of legislation, which was a stage higher than anything known among the surrounding nations, though it was not God’s normal or original code.

What was true of Israel is true of us. We do not realize, in the first stage of our redemption, all that is included in the word “sin.”

We are like men enveloped in morning mist, which permits them to descry only the bolder outlines of the cliffs around them, but as yet veils the minuter eminences or depressions. As the mist clears, surrounding objects become ever more distinctly defined: so that we know more of God, we know ourselves better, and realize what sin is, and come to see it where we had never guessed its presence.

Thus we condemn today what we permitted five years ago. It is interesting to find in these words of Christ the germ of an argument which His apostle used afterward in the Epistle to the

Galatians with such marvellous force. He said the Mosaic dispensation was a parenthesis; but it cannot disannul God's primal institution (Galatians 3:15-17).

July

July 11

Matthew 20:22

“But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, are able.”

THIS the cry of youth—ardent, impulsive, self-confident. It does not wait to calculate the ridges and hummocks that lie between it and its goal, but supposes that it will be able to skate the entire distance over the glistening azure blue ice. Without hesitation it counts on being able to brave all difficulty, surmount all hardship, drink the cup, and be baptized with the baptism.

But these men slept in Gethsemane, forsook the Master when He was arrested, and one of them at least failed Him at the cross.

Creature-might cannot carry us in the hour of our greatest peril. We can vaunt ourselves as we may; but we have to learn that we can only follow Christ in His cup and baptism, after we have been endued with the Spirit of Pentecost. I once knew two who said these words to God, when He presented them with the cup of suffering and death. They did not know all it involved; and they confessed afterward that they could never have stood to their choice, had they not been graciously and repeatedly enabled. But at the end they could not wish it to have been otherwise.

How different were the experiences of these two men! To one the

cup and baptism came swiftly, when he fell beneath the beheading axe of Herod (Acts 12:2); to the other they came in long, long years of sharing in the patience of Jesus Christ. These are different aspects of the same fellowship of suffering—swift death, or long waiting; but in both nearness to Jesus. We have no right to cherish the assurance of sitting right and left of the throne, if that only means our own power, authority, glory. But if it means nearness to Jesus, we may count on it with the utmost assurance.

July 12

Matthew 21:22

“And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.”

THIS was a very remarkable answer; showing that the Lord, in His human life, was the Author and Finisher of the life of faith. He did not quote His Divine power and Godhead as the cause of the withering of the fig-tree; but proceeded to give a lesson on faith, as much as to say that He had wrought the miracle by faith in His Father, and that they could do as He had done, if only they had a similar faith.

Where we get wrong in prayer is that we are so self-willed. We set ourselves to pray for things; we vow to sit up all night to bring God round to our way of thinking; we use strong cryings, tears and protestations; we endeavour to work ourselves into a frame of faith; we think we believe; we shut the doors of our heart against the tiniest suggestion or suspicion that we do not believe. And then we are surprised if the fig-tree does not wither, or the mountain remove.

Where are we wrong? It is not hard to see. There is too much of self and the energy of the flesh in all this. We can only believe for a thing when we are in such union with God that His thought and purpose can freely flow into us, suggesting what we should pray for, and leading us to that point in which there is a perfect sympathy and understanding between us and the Divine mind.

Faith is always the product of such a frame as this. Be sure that you are in alignment with God's purpose. Wait for Him till the impulses of nature have subsided, and the soul is hushed and still. Then the Spirit will lead you to ask what is in the will of God to give, and you will know instantly that the Spirit intercedes within you according to the will of God.

July 13

Matthew 22:37

"Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind."

THIS was Adam's blessed privilege in Eden; but he missed it.

The love of self took the place of the love of God. It is the aim of our blessed Lord to bring us back to that position. Perfect love is the sunlit peak to which His whole redemption tends. And perfect love would be perfect holiness. If a man were to love God and his neighbour as his first and chief and all-absorbing passion, there would be no room for sin to establish itself in his heart.

But does not this command seem altogether impracticable? It does; and it is impracticable to our mortal flesh. It is high; we cannot attain to it. Yet the very sublimity of the demand is intended to drive us to the Holy Ghost. He sheds abroad the love

of God in hearts which are fully yielded to Him. If you desire that this love should be your privilege, lie down low before the flow of the River of Life, and it will fill every gully and inlet of your nature.

But, perhaps you are not of an emotional nature; you cannot gleam and flash, and shed tears, and light up with smiles. You cannot love God with your heart. Then see, the Lord says that you can love Him with your mind, i.e., with your intellect, your choice, your will. Probably this is where you have to begin. Give your mind, your will, your power of choice to God. Make Him first. Ask Him to take the helm of your life, and to control, inspire, and direct its every movement. Crown Him King. And when the will, which is the high priest of your nature, has put its crown of life on the head of Christ, who is God Incarnate, all the emotions and affections and faculties of heart and life will come in to swell the court with their homage and acclaim.

July 14

Matthew 23:37

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!”

ONLY the greatest artists can make immortal pictures from simple domestic scenes. To detect the imperishable and the infinite in the common and ordinary, and to preserve it in such a form as to arrest the ages, this is the mark of consummate power.

But how characteristic of Jesus—a broken bottle skin, a patched

garment, a handful of girls shut out of a village feast—these are the subjects which He painted into never-to-be-forgotten pictures.

Lord, give us childlike hearts that we may see the secrets that are hidden in common things!

But how this image arrests us! Who has not heard the cluck of the hen when danger was threatening her brood? She is quicker to detect its proximity than her callow young; and she must needs insert herself between it and them. Ah, how often does the rush of life drown the call of Jesus to come under His wing for rest and safety!

Bunyan says that the hen has a variety of calls, some six or eight. Jesus also calls us for different purposes—sometimes to nestle near His heart for fellowship; sometimes for rest. Sometimes He calls us to feast on some rich dainty, to which He has directed us in the Word; and sometimes to hide in the shadow of His wings till dreaded evils pass us by.

Oh that we more often heard and obeyed that warning note!

Probably there is never a temptation nor trial which is not thus anticipated and preceded. When passion overcomes you by a sudden rush, you must not impute your failure to any lapse in your Saviour's care. He called you, but you could not hear. "How often!" Who can enumerate the many, many times when we have been summoned by Jesus nearer to Himself, but would not?

July 15

Matthew 24:32

“Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh:”

YOU say that it is rather overdue. The nipping winds and morning frosts have held back vegetation so long that it has seemed as if summer would never visit us, spreading her carpet on the earth, and giving her intense hues to stream and lake and sky.

But summer is nigh in spite of all prognostications to the contrary, because He is nigh, who is the King of summer, whose presence makes summer. Be sure that He, and therefore it, is nigh, even at the doors.

He is always nigh, and those that love Him realize the perpetual summer of His presence; but His appearing, the parousia, (Second Coming) is nigh. Presently the swing doors will be flung wide, and His triumphal procession will sweep into our view. Then the millennial summer of the world will break, and her long winter will be gone forever. Then the bride will hear Him say: “The winter is over and gone; the time of the singing of birds is come: arise, my fair one, and come.”

The rumours of war that frighten the nations; the slackening faith and waning love; the dissemination of the Gospel to all lands; the great movement now in progress in the midst of the ancient people of God; the decrease of conversion work in favor of the preparation of the Bride for the Bridegroom—all these are like the tender shoots of the fig-tree which show that the Lord is at hand.

Oh, lonely and sequestered ones, by His appearing, and by our gathering together unto Him, be of good courage, and do the King’s work.

Do you want perpetual summer in your soul? There is only one condition which needs to be fulfilled. You must leave the

northern climes to dwell between the Tropics, where the sun is always on the throne of the sky. Thy sun shall no more go down.

July 16

Matthew 25:24

“Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed:”

IT is remarkable that the man who had one talent should hide it. If we had been told that he who had five had hidden one we should not have been surprised; but for the man who had only one to hide it—this is startling; but it is true to life.

The people whose talents and opportunities are very slight and slender are they who are tempted to do nothing at all. “I can do so very little; it will not make much difference if I do nothing: I shall not be missed; my tiny push is not needed to turn the scale.” That is the way they talk. They forget that an ounce-weight may turn the scales where hundred-weights are balanced. They do not realize that the last flake of white snow just oversets the gathering avalanche, and sends it into the vales beneath.

Are you one of these slenderly-endowed ones? And are you doing all you can? Are you doing anything? Even though you cannot do much in your isolation, you might join with others and do much. You might invest your little all in the bank of the Church, and trade as part of that heavenly corporation. Oh, disinter your one talent! Be sure you have one; ask the Master where and what it is; place yourself at His disposal. If it is only to carry refreshment to the harvesters—do that. Be thou faithful in thy very little.

We need not wait for the great future, to obtain this multiplication or withdrawal of our talents. They are already waxing or waning in our hands. There are many among us who, as life has progressed, have come into the use of powers of which at first they were perfectly ignorant; whilst others are losing, through misuse, the little they had.

July 17

Matthew 26:28

“For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”

THE first covenant was not ratified without blood. For when every commandment had been spoken by Moses, he took the blood of the calves and goats, sprinkled the people, and said, “This is the blood of the covenant” (Hebrews 9:19-20). So the second covenant must be ratified by blood; not by that of calves and goats, but by the precious blood of Jesus Himself. He who made the covenant sealed it with His blood, that we might have strong assurance.

But Christ has put the cup which holds the emblem of His blood into our hands, and bids us drink it. What, then, do we mean when at the Supper we lift that sacred cup to our lips? Are we not saying by that significant act, Remember thy covenant? Are we not reminding Jesus that we are relying upon Him to do His part? Are we not pledging ourselves to Him as His own, bound to Him by indissoluble ties, and satisfied with His most blessed service?

Among the most precious promises of the new covenant is that in which God promises to remember our sins no more. Here is

the ground which enables God to forgive so freely. The blood has been shed for many unto the remission of sins; the claims of infinite justice have been met; the righteous demands of a broken law satisfied; the barriers have been removed that might have restrained the manifestation of Divine love, though they could not obstruct the love. And now we may sit with Christ at His table in His kingdom, not rebels, but welcome guests.

Also among the promises of the new covenant is that in which God promises that we shall be His people, and He our God. This item also is presented by us in humble expectancy, whilst, in expectant faith, we say, "Do as Thou hast said."

July

July 18

Matthew 27:32

“And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his cross.”

IF we may judge from the familiar way in which Matthew speaks of the sons of this Cyrenian, who the soldiers brutally compelled to carry our Saviour's cross, we should infer that from this hour he became a Christian. He had little suspected such a thing in the early morning, when he left his lodging to attend to his business; but, being constrained to go to Calvary, he lingered there of his own accord through those anxious hours, and was led to feel that such a sufferer, to whom even Nature paid such homage, was worthy henceforth to receive his loyalty.

But how many of us are carrying our cross because we are compelled! There seems no alternative but to carry the dead weight of our cross with us everywhere, only wishing a hundred times each day that we might have respite. Dear soul, that cross is yet going to be the greatest blessing of your life if it leads you to the Crucified, and you find in Him what will transform it into the ladder which links earth with heaven, swaying beneath angel tread.

If Simon became a Christian, with what rapture must he have reviewed that incident in his life! How easy it would have been to carry the cross had he known Jesus as he came to know Him afterward! He would have needed no compelling! So if you saw

the will of Jesus in your cross, and that you were carrying it with Him, how much easier it would be! But that is so. He is in it. Bear it with Him; out of the cross will fall a shower of flowers.

There is no such thing as chance in our lives. It might have seemed such that Simon was coming into Jerusalem at that moment. It was shown, however, to be part of the Eternal counsel.

Dare to believe in the Divine purpose which orders your cross.

July 19

Matthew 28:5

“And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.”

THE emphasis is on the pronoun “ye”. The angel meant, As for these sentinels that are quaking in dread and becoming as dead men, it is meet and natural that they should do so. They are strangers to Him whom ye seek, and are set here to do the work of His foes. But there is no need for those that seek Jesus to fear.

Are you seeking the forgiveness of your sins through His blood?

Fear not ye! Do not fear that they are too many to be forgiven. Do not fear that you have not the right faith. Do not fear that you will find His door shut. Do not fear that He will always be reminding you of what you have cost Him. Do not fear that He will let you drift from Him again. Ye seek the Lord who was crucified. Fear not!

Are you seeking a closer identification with His death? Fear not!

There is no possibility of realizing the life which is life indeed, except through identification with the death and grave of Jesus. We must sink deep down into reunion with Him who lay there as our representative. But as God takes us at our word, and begins to strip us of all we had taken pride in; as the fear of what may be involved crosses our hearts with its chill dread—again we may be assured as we hear the angel say, “Fear not, ye who seek Jesus that was crucified.”

And when at last you are seeking to follow Him through the valley of shadow—Fear not! You will never see Him as He is, till this mortal is surrendered, and the house not made with hands entered. But if the heart faints, and the flesh fails, fear not ye, who through that mysterious change seek Jesus that was crucified, but now liveth forevermore at the right hand of God.

July 20

Mark 1:13

“And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him.”

IN what different circumstances is the last Adam to the first! He began in a garden which the Lord God had planted; but his great Antitype in a wilderness, the thorns of which spoke of that primal sin. But whereas the first Adam transformed the garden into a wilderness, the last will convert all desert places into gardens—

whether they be in the heart, or the world around—so that they shall blossom as the rose.

To Adam the beasts came, that he might name them; but at the coming of the last Adam they were wild. “He was with the wild beasts.” Yet they were tame to his pure manhood. “He had dominion over the works of God’s hands.” On his brow the crown of royalty over the inferior races, which man had lost, was already placed. Is it not also true that holy men still have power over the lower creation? Certainly Francis of Assissi had. And in the ages, yet future, the children shall play, unhurt, amid the wild beasts of the forest.

Again it is true of thee, O son of man, that, like thy Lord, thou art between the wild beasts and the angels. On the one side thou touchest the lower, and on the other the higher. At every moment thou art called to choose between these twain. Thy body calls thee this way, and thy spirit that. Be sure to deny the lower appetites; rule them; be king and lord in the realm of thy soul. Make them crouch around thee, as the lions of Daniel’s den. Get thy Lord to master them for thee. Else thou wilt miss the angels of God, who come to encamp around thee, and minister to thee, as one of the heirs of salvation. Was it here that Christ learned to contrast His homelessness with the lairs of the beasts?

July 21

Mark 2:22

“And no man putteth new wine into old bottles: else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred: but new wine must be put into new bottles.”

AH, our Lord! Thou hast been speaking of the bridegroom and His coming to the Feast. Thou remindest us of the olden comparison of Thy love as better than wine, and of Thy first

miracle at Cana of Galilee. May Thy love be poured into our hearts as the fresh juice crushed from the grapes! We have no love of our own to offer Thee: but, oh, pour Thy love into hearts that yearn to love Thee with Thy love. And let it not be only the memory of the love that was, but the living, fresh enjoyment of the love that is ever new. The new wine of Thy love is what we long for, that it may sweep into our hearts as the spring tide along the golden sands, which it frees from their accumulation of debris and waste.

Oh for the constraints of Thy love—new, fresh, living!

But the Master says, Children, if you have your request, the new wine may refuse to take on with the old shapes; it will make for itself new channels and forms of manifestations; when others fast, you will feast; when others feast, you will be sad. You will be counted eccentric and peculiar. Men will murmur at you, and find fault. They may even cast you out of their churches and social circles.

There is but one answer: Leave us not to ourselves. Permit us not to follow the promptings and suggestions of our undisciplined wills; but provide for us the new wine-skins also. Show us what Thou wouldst have us be and do; and let the methods in which our hearts' devotion shall express itself be so lovely, so befitting, so helpful to the world, and so full of God, that men may recognize Thy hand, and adore Thee. Let not Thy love be spilled, but stored for the refreshment of others through our lives. Oh, give us love!

July 22

Mark 3:14

“And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach,”

THIS is the threefold work of the Church, and of each disciple.

That we might be with Him: The Master dearly loves our company. Let us seek it more. Not necessarily praying, or praising, or learning—but just being quietly with Him. It was said of a holy man, Mons de Rentz, that his union and converse with God were so wonderful, that after he had spent several hours therein, he found himself in the end as if he had only then begun it, except only that he had then yet more desire to continue it. And at length he arrived to that height that it seemed as though he never ended it at all; being wholly and constantly in inward recollection and application to God. After whose example let us press, that we may enjoy like near approach to God, and our lives be suitably ordered for His glory.

That He might send them forth to preach: He cannot come forth from the secret chamber of eternity to preach, as once He was wont to do; and therefore He is ever raising up voices, witnesses, lips which He teaches how to speak, and touches with His live coal.

Has He not sent you forth, if not by lip, yet by life to bear witness to His love? Like the seraphim, if you have two pair of wings for reverent modesty, you have at least one pair for flight. Oh, breathe the prayer, “Send me.”

That they might have authority over demons: The power of Satan is strong; it mastered Adam, but it met more than its match in the Christ-nature. If that nature is regnant in you, you, too, will have power over all the power of the enemy. Nothing shall by any means hurt you, and you will be able to deliver others who have long been held captive.

July 23

Mark 4:19

“And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.”

THERE is enough nutriment in the land for the thorns alone or for the wheat alone, but not for both; and so there is a brief struggle for mastery, in which the sturdy weed prevails against the slender wheat, and chokes it. Nourishment which should go to its support is drained away from it; and though it does not actually expire, it leads a struggling existence, and becomes unfruitful.

What are these weeds?

For the poor man—Cares: The Greek word for care is Division.

Cares divide our heart, and distract it in many different directions.

What shall we eat? What shall we drink? Wherewithal shall we be clothed? How shall we meet our rent and other expenses? It is almost impossible to settle to our prayer, or Bible-study, or Christian work, or to the culture of the soul-life, while questions like these intrude. What shall the poor man do to prevent the Word from becoming unfruitful? He must take his cares to his Father, and by one act deposit them in His safe-keeping. And thereafter, as a care tries to break in on the peace of his heart, he must treat it as a positive temptation, handing it over to God.

For the prosperous man—Riches: They will distract as much as anxiety does. How much they amount to! Oh, the endless

figurings in the brain—how to keep, or invest, or increase. The case for him is to look on all he has as a stewardship for God, deducting only a moderate percentage for himself.

For us all—Lusts: Strong and inordinate desires for what may be right in itself, but which we follow with extravagant zest. What is right in itself may become wrong if we put it in God's place, and allow it to monopolize us unduly. Oh, Great Husbandman, root up the thorns by Thy Holy Spirit!

July 24

Mark 5:35

“While he yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogue's house certain which said, Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Master any further?”

WHAT hopelessness! They had watched the sweet flower fade, till no color was left on the pale cheek, and the merry voice was still; and then they thought of the Galilean Teacher: “Why cost Him time and trouble? His visit will be useless now! It was very kind of Him to be willing to come! But it is now of no use! Very kind; but no use.”

We go to God in comparatively small trials, and think He can help us. But there are times when we say: It is no use troubling further, we must just bear our trial as well as we can; God Himself cannot help us. Can He give back that twin-soul? Can He restore the love that has died out? Can He undo this unhappy marriage?

Can He deliver from that lifelong paralysis? Life is extinct; hope is dead; the light has dipped below the horizon. It is no use to

trouble God or man. We have no alternative but to suffer till eternity explains the mysteries of time.

But Jesus knows the way out. He says in His sweet undertone,

“Fear not! Only believe.” He has the keys of death. He never would have let things come to this awful pass by His delay unless He had known that, even if the worse came to the worst, all would end well. He has purposely delayed till this, that He might have the better opportunity of showing you what God can do. Fear not! The hand of the Almighty Saviour has yours within its grasp. He will not let you stumble as you go down this dark staircase by His side.

Only believe: have faith in Him. All may seem very mysterious now, but you will come to see that it was the wisest and best after all. You shall yet clasp to your heart the lost one, arrayed in resurrection beauty.

July

July 25

Mark 6:30

“And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught.”

TALKING things over with Jesus! It is a precious secret! When one has been out in the world, it is delightful to talk over what has happened in the seclusion of the home. We have read of a wife who reserved one room in the house, which no one was permitted to enter but her husband and herself; and there they interchanged their mutual confidences. So it is a blessed habit to talk over everything with Jesus, and to review the events of the past beneath the light of His loving eyes.

“We have had much success, Master,” we cry, “The cities were moved; the devils were subject; the crowds followed us everywhere.” Ah, children, He seems to say, Those who cry

“Hosanna” today will cry “Crucify” tomorrow: the real work of God is not done amid congratulating crowds, but in the heart’s depths, and in the ante-chamber. See that ye dwell not on the excitement of the outward reception, lest you attribute your success to something in yourselves, and pride yourselves upon it, and become unsuitable for My use. All success comes from above.

“We have been greatly persecuted, and our mission seems to

have been a failure, Master,” we cry at another time. “Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?”

“Care not for it,” the same wise Counsellor replies, “I at least am satisfied; I will see to it that your reward is according to your faithfulness, if not to your success; and there shall be a remnant of good soil that shall repay one hundredfold.”

Thus His loving words extract the poison from success, and rally us from despondency. Oh, Christian workers, get into the secret of His presence, that He may correct, criticize, or encourage as He pleases.

July 26

Mark 8:12

“And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and saith, Why doth this generation seek after a sign? verily I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation.”

THIS Evangelist twice over calls attention to the Lord’s sighs—

in Mark 7:34, and here. A sigh is one of the most touching and significant tokens of excessive grief! When Nature is too deeply overwrought to remember her necessary inspirations, and has to compensate for their omission by one deep-drawn breath, we sigh, we sigh deeply in our spirit.

Looking up to heaven, He sighed. As the deaf mute stood before Him—an image of all the closed hearts around Him; of all the inarticulate unexpressed desires; of all the sin and sorrow of mankind—the sensitive heart of Jesus responded with a deep-

drawn sigh. But there was simultaneously a heavenward look, which mingled infinite hope in it. If the sigh spoke of His tender sympathy, the look declared His close union with God, by virtue of which He was competent to meet the direst need. Whenever you sigh, look up to heaven. Heaven's light turns tears into jewels!

He sighed deeply. The obdurate and impenetrable hardness of the Pharisees; their willful misinterpretation of His words and mission; their pride and bigotry—wrung the Lord's heart with bitterness. He turned sorrowfully away. There was no possibility of furnishing help, since on their side there was no desire for it, or belief in Him. Perhaps such sighs still break from His heart, as He views mankind; but through them He is doing His best to bring about the time when all sorrow and sighing shall flee away forever.

The Son of God, in doing good, would look to heaven and sigh; but His sighs were followed by the touch and word of power. Let us not be content with the sigh of sympathy and regret.

July 27

Mark 9:22-23

“And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us.

23 Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.”

YES, there was an if in this sad case. But the father put it in the wrong place. He put it against Christ's power, “If Thou canst do

anything.” But it was really on the side of his own ability to believe. If only he believed, all else would easily be possible. Even though his faith were small, it would suffice; the tiniest seed can appropriate the chemical products of the soil, and transmute them into digestible products; the narrowest channel will suffice for the passage of the waters of the whole ocean if you give enough time. Let us not worry about the greatness or smallness of our faith; the main point is whether our faith is directed toward the living Saviour.

There are many issues to which these words may be applied. If Jesus can save me from the power of sin! No; if thou canst believe, He can. If Jesus can deliver out of a mesh of temptation and perplexity! No; if thou canst believe, He will. If Jesus can revive His work mightily to the upbuilding of His Church and the ingathering of the lost! No; if thou canst believe for it.

Dost thou want that faith? It may be had thus. Look away from difficulty and temptation to Jesus; consider Him; feed thy faith on its native food of promise; familiarize thyself with fellowship with the promises; study what He has done for others: thus thou wilt believe. For every thought of thy little faith take ten thoughts of His faithfulness.

“All things are possible to God,
To Christ the power of God in man;
To me, when I am all subdued,
When I in Christ am formed again,
And witness from my sins set free,
All things are possible to me.”

July 28

Mark 10:32

“And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus went before them: and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid. And he took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen unto him,”

THE radiant vision of the Transfiguration was deliberately forsaken, as the Lord took the way of the cross, going to Jerusalem to die. The shadow of His awful exodus had already fallen upon the little group. Behold that resolute figure—the wan face lit up with the fire of an invincible resolve—going in front, climbing the difficult ascent. The apostles cannot keep step with His eager steps, and they fear as an instinctive dread of coming events casts its chilling mantle around them. There was something in their Master they could not understand.

Such moments come to all lives, when Jesus leads us to the cross. How often He asks for a deeper consecration; a more complete crossing of natural inclination for the sake of His Gospel; a more intense purpose. At His bidding we must tear ourselves away from ambitions which had fascinated, and dreams which had allured. We must no longer live on the lower level, however pleasant to flesh and blood, but gird ourselves to go up to Jerusalem.

At such moments He always goes before us. We may not see Him until we begin to follow in the direction of His voice; but so soon as we set ourselves to obey, we become aware of His prevenient grace. He is just in front. He never puts forth His own sheep without going before them. He never asks us to tread a path which has not been trodden by His footsteps. Happy are they who follow Him!

In the first effort to follow Jesus, there may be amazement and not a little fear. The unaccustomed path, the strange look on His face, the shadow of the cross—all dissuade us. But as He dilates on the joy set before Him and us, we learn to think lightly of the difficulties in comparison with the goal.

July 29

Mark 11:22

“And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God.”

THIS command might be rendered, “Have the faith of God.” As long as I live, I shall remember this text in connection with my first meeting with Hudson Taylor. He was to preach for me on a Sunday morning, now years ago, and gave out this as his text. But he said that he had always interpreted it as dealing rather with God’s faith to us than ours to Him; so that it ran thus: Reckon on God’s faithfulness.

1. We must be sure that we are on God’s plan. There is a prepared path for us, along which God has stored up all necessary supplies. But if we want those supplies, we must find the path and follow it. Along the track which He has marked out between this world and Home, our Father has erected cairns full of provisions; but we must let His route prevail over our own notions and wishes, if we are to enjoy His preparations.

2. We must be prepared to wait on Him. For these things He will be inquired of. Though He knows what we need, He expects our humble request, that we may be perpetually reminded of our entire dependence on Him. He sometimes appears to tarry to draw out our faith and prayer. But He will never utterly fail.

3. We must walk worthily of Him. God shows Himself strong only on behalf of those whose heart is perfect toward Him. By His enabling grace we must put away the old manner of life, and be renewed in the spirit of our mind, that we may be such whom the great God shall delight to honour. Let such trust Him to the hilt; they will find Him faithful. He will never put us into positions of peril and responsibility, and leave us to take our chance.

July 30

Mark 12:27

“He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err.”

SINCE God spoke of Himself as the God of the patriarchs, centuries after they had been borne to their graves, it stood to reason that they were yet living; and on this ground our Lord met the allegation that there is no life beyond death.

Death is not a state or condition, but an act. We speak of the dead; but in point of fact there are none such. We should speak of those who have died. They were living up to the moment of death; but they were living quite as much afterward. Death is like birth, an act, a transition, a passage into a freer life. Never think of a death as a state, but as resembling a bridge which, for a moment, casts its shadow on the express train, which flashes beneath, but does not stay.

All our dear ones are living. As vividly, as keenly, as intensely as ever: with all the love and faith and intelligence with which we were wont to associate their beloved personality. It may be that they think of us as only half alive, compared with their own intense and vivid experience of the life which draws its breath

from the manifested presence of God. Oh, do not fear that they will cease to recognize, know, or love you! Always it remains true, "Without us they cannot be made perfect."

Those who live on either side of death may meet in God. Those who are present in the body, and those who are absent from it, meet in proportion as they approach God. When we come near Him in thought, and prayer, and love, we are come to the spirits of the just made perfect. God is the glorious centre of all the lines that radiate into all worlds. "Ye are come to God, the Judge of all . . . and to the spirits of the just made perfect."

July 31

Mark 13:35

"Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning:"

NO, we know not. It is better that we should not know. But He must be very near. Even has passed; the beams of His presence had just died off the world, and the after-glow was still lingering in the ministry of the apostles in the early Church.

Midnight has passed; it reached its deepest darkness in the middle ages, when only a few holy souls shone like stars in the surrounding gloom. Cock-crow has passed; Wycliffe and Luther, and others, heralded the morning. And now the morning is upon us; nay, it is shining more and more unto the perfect day. He must be near, even at the doors. Be ready, O virgin souls, to go forth to meet Him!

But may not these words be interpreted in yet another way?

Jesus comes to us in the evening twilight, when the joy of our life seems slowly waning. He comes to us in the deep night of depression, bereavement, and anguish. He comes to us in the hope and expectancy of each new dawn, when we gird ourselves to fresh toils and endeavours. He comes to us in the morning, and satisfies us with His mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all the day.

Only let us watch for His coming, with ears attentive to His lightest footfall, His softest whisper. Then, when He shows Himself through the lattice, or softly whispers, "Come away," we shall arise and go forth with Him to the beds of lilies and the gardens of myrrh.

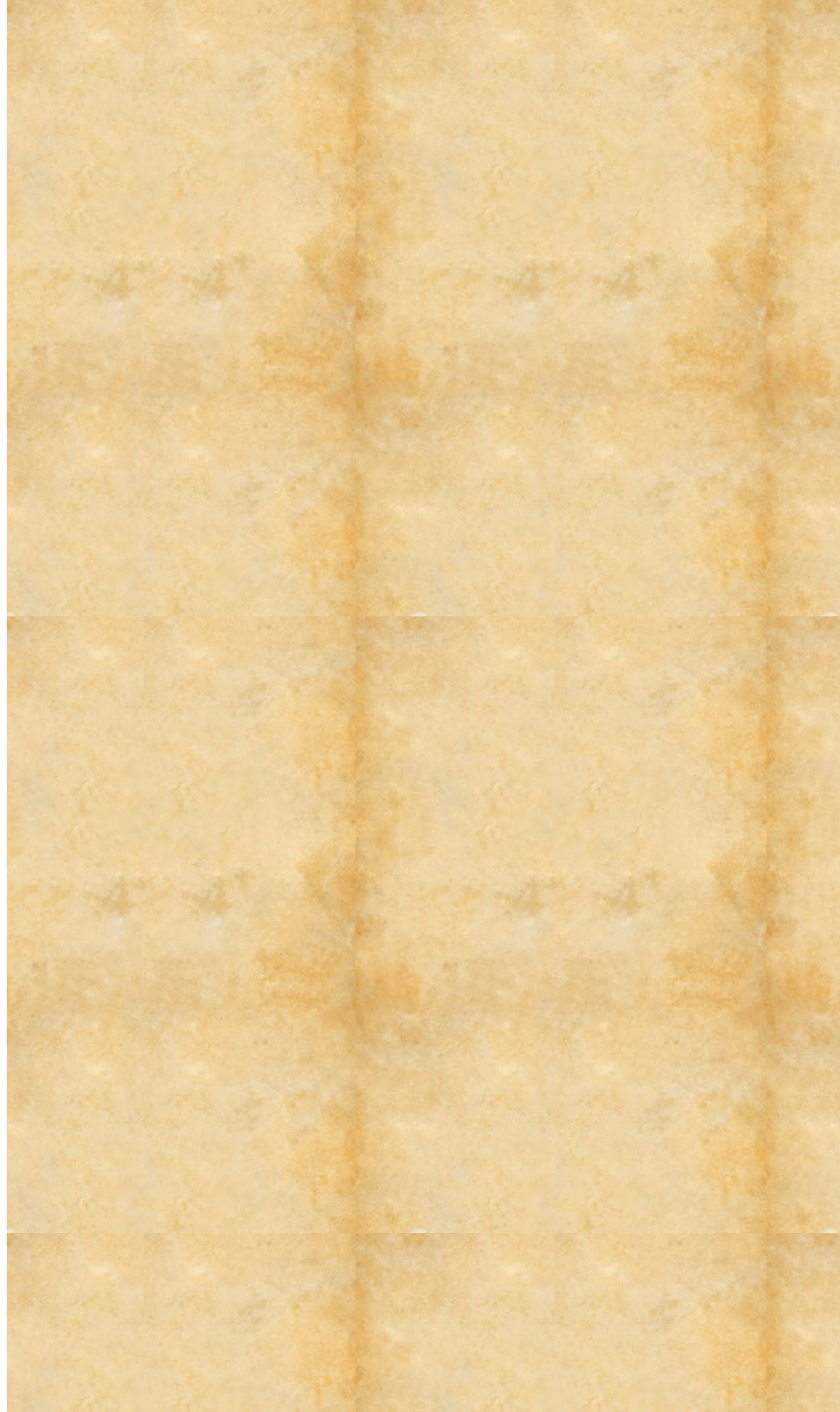
Are we quite sure that we belong to His house? "Whose house are we," says the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews. But there are conditions: we must be born into it by regeneration; we must walk as becometh saints; we must hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end. Christ is Lord over this house, and His will is law (Hebrews 3:1-9).

Our Daily Homily

By

F.B. Meyer

1. **August 1st through 7th**
2. **August 8th through 14th**
3. **August 15th through 21st**
4. **August 22nd through 31st**



August

August 1

Genesis 1:5

“And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.”

HOW different is God’s method from man’s! The creature works from day to night, his best is first; but darkness overshadows his fairest hopes and best-concerted schemes. The Creator’s days begin with the preceding eve. He reckons the evenings and nights into the days, because out of them the day is born; they usher in the light, and recreate body and brain for the busy hours that follow.

Art thou disappointed in Christian work?— Remember that God wrought on through long dark ages, ere His schemes were evolved in order and beauty. Human schemes begin with blare of trumpet and roll of drum, but are soon plunged in darkness. The heavenly seed is sown in autumn shadows; the foundation-stone of redemption was laid amid the gloom of Calvary; the work that lasts generally begins amid disappointment, difficulty, and heart-break, but inevitably passes into the day.

Art thou passing through the bitterness of soul-trouble?— For weeks there has been no ray of comfort, no sign of deliverance. Yet every dark hour is hastening toward the dawn. Thou shalt see thy Beloved walking toward thee in the morning light.

Art thou in despair for the worm?— The times are dark, and

threaten to get darker. But if the first creation began in the dark, can it be wondered at that the second must begin there to? But as the one emerged in daylight, so shall the other. The morning cometh; see the star of day standing sentry! Time, is bearing us to a day that shall never go down to night, but shall mount ever toward its meridian.

August 2

Genesis 2:15

“And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.”

THUS God started man in an ideal home. Memories of Eden, exquisite as dreams, weave the background of human life.

Fellowship with the Creator, who walked its glades; its river, trees, and fruits; its blessed companionship; its light and ennobling toils— how fair the picture!

The Garden of Eden: That was God’s ideal. When men point thee to the scars on the world’s face, left by the trail of the Arab slaver, the march of the army, the decaying glory of human civilization, and ask how such things are consistent with God’s love, point to that garden and say, “That is what the love of God meant for man; Satan and sin have wrought this.”

The Garden of Gethsemane: When man forfeited Paradise, the Saviour was revealed to regain it. He trod the winepress alone in the shadowed garden of the olive trees, that through its glades

He might pass to His cross, and so make the wastes of sin bloom again as Eden. Is it wonderful that another Paradise is possible, when He sowed its seeds and watered the soil with His blood?

Turning wastes into gardens: In Eden man wrought as God's fellow worker; and we are called each day to do something toward reconstructing the Lost Paradise. Find thy part in delving, sowing, watering, or tending the tender shoots! Seek that thine heart should be an Eden, kept sacred for thy King, and endeavour thy best to plant gardens where hitherto sand-wastes and thorn, thickets have prevailed. Then, "instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree; and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off." (Isa 55:13)

August 3

Genesis 3:9

"And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?"

THE cool of the day, when the breeze steals over the fevered landscape, is an appropriate time for man to hold fellowship with God. We need to have His hand laid on our throbbing temples, stilling, tranquillizing, shedding His serenity throughout our being.

What the breath of evening is in summer, fellowship with God will be for thee, my soul; see that thou art not so absorbed with thy sins, thy love, or thy business, as to miss the tryst, when the sun

is setting.

God misses His child. That hour of fellowship was much to Adam, and it was more to God. Love, God's love, craves for fellowship. As the musician for his lute, as the hart for the brook, as the mother for the twining arms and babbling talk of her child—so does God long for the free outpourings of His child's heart in prayer; misses them when withheld; is jealous when they are fitful and intermittent.

God seeks His child. He did not wait till Adam found his way back to His side. But He hastened in search of him. So through the glades He comes to seek thee, O truant one! Where art thou, that for these many days thou hast withheld thyself from the hour of prayer?

Wilt thou not say with the psalmist, "When thou saidst, Seek ye my face, my heart said unto Thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek?" (Ps 27:8)

God mourns over His child. These words, in one version, are rendered, Alas, for thee: as though the heart of God were wrung with sorrow for our loss, as well as His. But He does not content Himself with regret. By the pang of travail, by the prick of thorns, by the necessity of labour, by sacrifice and gifts of covering for our nakedness, He brings us back to Himself.

August 4

Genesis 4:9

“And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother’s keeper?”

THE first question God puts to the soul is, “Adam, where art thou?” The next, “Where is Abel thy brother?” We are our brothers’ keepers. Each within our reach, all who need our help, all related to us by the ties of the family, have a claim on us. We must not take an advantage over them; their weakness and need are strong claims on our resources of every kind; we are bound to keep them so far as we can; we may at any moment be called to give an account of their whereabouts. To dispute this is to betray the spirit of Cain, who was a murderer.

God keeps an inventory of His saints. In His book their names are written. Their names, abode and circumstances; their fathers, mothers and brothers; their occupation, whether they keep the sheep or till the land: all are known to Him, because they are fixed by His providence. Whatever touches them is, therefore, instantly known to Him. It is as though they were part of His very being, and a stab of pain to them thrills His heart.

God calls us to help Him in keeping one another. We are to watch for each other’s souls; to consider one another to provoke to good works; to bear one another’s burden; to exhort each other, to convert the wanderer from the path of the destroyer, and to wash stains from his feet. The cure of souls is the work of all the saints.

But this is only possible to those who have been baptized into the Spirit of Christ. Remember that you have just as much love toward God, as you are willing to show toward the brother whom you have seen. “This commandment have we from Him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.” (1 John 4:21)

August 5

Genesis 5:24

“And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him.”

WHAT an epitaph on this ancient saint! It is as clear-cut today as when first recorded here. We know nothing of Enoch but this brief record; but it tells us everything. It was not an act or a number of acts, but a high tone of life constantly maintained. Better to walk with God every day in calm, unbroken fellowship, than to have occasional rapturous experiences, succeeded by long relapses and backslidings. The Hebrew word might be rendered, “Enoch walked, and continued to walk.”

Be sure to go God’s Way. He will not walk with thee in thy way, but thou mayest walk with Him in His. To this He calls thee. Each moment, and especially when two or three roads diverge, look up to Him, and say, “Which way art Thou taking, that I may accompany Thee?” It will not be so hard to forsake inviting paths and engaging companions, if only the eye is kept fixed on His face, and the track of His footsteps determines thy road beyond hesitation or dispute.

Be sure to keep God’s Pace. Do not run impetuously before Him; learn to wait His time: the minute-hand as well as the hour-hand must point the exact moment for action. Do not loiter behind in indolence or sloth. Be loyal and true to His ideals, and quick to obey His least commands.

Be sure to wear God’s Livery. He is in the light; the light is His chosen symbol; it ill becomes thee to wear the unfruitful works of darkness. Put them off, and put on the armour of light. Walk with Him daily in stainless robes, washed in the blood of the Lamb. Then thy fellowship shall be with the Father, the Son, and

the Holy Spirit, and with all holy souls everywhere.

August 6

Genesis 6:9

“These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.”

THE eyes of God went to and fro over the ancient world, where sin reigned unchecked, to discover one grateful spectacle. But they were doomed to disappointment, till they lighted on Noah. He found grace in the eyes of the Lord, because he only had God seen to be righteous in all his generation. Like Antipas, he dwelt where Satan’s seat was, held fast the Divine name, and was God’s faithful witness. Be thou loyal to God, my soul, though thou stand alone.

There are three characteristics in the man who finds grace in the eyes of the Lord.

In himself he is Just. Not faultless, as judged by the white light of eternity; but blameless, so far as his own consciousness is concerned. He wears ever the white flower of a blameless life.

His strength is as the strength of ten, because his heart is pure.

He exercises himself to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and man. This condition is only possible to faith that opens the door of the heart to receive the life of God. Wouldst thou be just, welcome that Just One. Let Him live within

thee.

Toward man he is Upright. He does not keep his eyes bowing down to the ground in shame, or furtively looking around to gain a secret advantage; he looks the whole world in the face. His eyes reflect the integrity and purity of his soul; they beam with sincerity, unselfishness and love.

With respect to God, he abides in Perpetual Fellowship. This was worth our getting, though we parted with all our jewels to win it. To be tuned into one deep accord with the Divine nature; to answer to Him with one full, responsive chord; to be always found where God is, and never where He is not—that was life indeed.

August 7

Genesis 7:9

“There went in two and two unto Noah into the ark, the male and the female, as God had commanded Noah.”

THIS is the secret of a holy and blessed Life. Most of our sorrows and disappointments have come on us because we have chosen our own path, and done according to our own will.

In obeying, we must sometimes walk in the dark. When Noah began to walk with God, he knew not that it would lead him into collision with his generation, with the suggestions of common sense and experience, and with much that he held dear as life. But walking on each day, he grew strong to trust in the bare word

of his Almighty Guide, and grasped it as men in the catacombs will keep their hand on a tiny string or cord, until the first streak of daylight appear. Obey absolutely the voice that speaks in thy heart; the way is dark, but it is the way.

In obeying, we must learn to wait. For one hundred and twenty years the long-suffering of God waited, and during that weary period this true heart failed not. Then for seven days the patriarch waited within the closed doors. It is not easy to bear the long strain of endurance. To rush into the battle, to do something desperate, to strike for liberty—this is the choice of the flesh; but to live in hourly fear, to toil on without result, to see the years stealing away the bank or shoal on which our heart had erected its structures of hope—this is hardest of all, unless our hope is anchored beyond life's ebb and swell.

In obeying God others obey us. How came it that these creeping things and flying fowls, these living creatures, clean and unclean, entered the Ark so tamely and submissively? Surely a Divine constraint was upon them. When we are under authority, we can say, "Go," "Come," "Do this." All things serve the man who serves the Divine Master, Christ.

August

August 8

Genesis 8:1

“And God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark: and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters asswaged;”

HE cannot forget thee, though all hearts that loved thee are cold in death, and though floods of trouble surge and break around.

He comes nearest when there is none else to intercept His love. The floods but bear us nearer to His heart, above the tops of the highest hills.

He could not forget because His honour was pledged. There was a tacit understanding between Noah and Himself, that if His servant obeyed His mandate He would be responsible for the consequences that obedience might involve. There is no need to make bargains with God, as Jacob did. It is far better simply to obey, sure that whatever the highest honour may demand, God will be equal to it.

He will have prepared more than we expected.

He could not forget, because He rode the waters with His child.

He said, “Come thou into the Ark,” evidently He was inside; and when it is said that God shut him in, it was from inside that the door was locked. Whatever happened to Noah was an experience

for his Almighty Friend. They had walked together on the earth; they now shared together the seclusion of the Ark. God is identified in the experiences of His saints. Their pangs, and tears, and waiting-hours are His. He can no more forget, than a mother her sucking child.

He could not forget, because Noah was a type of His beloved Son. Across the dark sea of death, the cross of Jesus has brought Him and His own: so that we now belong, not to the old world which is under the curse, but to the world of Resurrection-Life. The dark woes of Calvary were imaged there: how could God forget?

Reckon on God's faithfulness: He will not leave thy soul in Hades.

August 9

Genesis 9:13

"I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth."

A COVENANT is a promise or undertaking, resting on certain conditions, with a sign or token attached to it. The rainbow on the rain cloud, the Lord's Supper, the wedding-ring, are signs and seals of the respective covenants to which they belong. Whenever we see them we should bethink ourselves of the

covenant.

Whenever you see a rainbow, recall the covenant into which God has entered with thee; for as He has sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so His kindness shall not depart from thee, nor the covenant of His peace be removed. Three things are needed to make a rainbow.

A cloud: When man's sin overshadowed Paradise, the bow of promise shone; and when the thunderclouds gathered about the Saviour's path, the Divine voice assured Him that as He had glorified the Divine Name by His life, He should glorify it much more by His death. When the black clouds of conviction, bereavement, soul-anguish beset thee, look out for the bow: it is always there, though sufferers do not always perceive it.

Rain: There are no rainbows unless there be falling drops to catch and unravel the sunbeams. It may be that all evil is worse in its anticipation than in its endurance; but this is certain, that the big drops of sorrow have to patter on our souls before we can realize all that God is prepared to be to us.

Sunshine: It is only when God comes into our grief that we can see the treasures of Love and Grace which are stored for us in Him.

We never know how great a blessing sorrow may be till we carry it into the light of the King's face. It is the dark canvas on which the artist produces his most marvellous effects.

August 10

Genesis 10:5

“By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands; every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations.”

FEW realize the treasures that lie in this heap of names. This chapter is the key to ancient histories and contains many of the names that lie on our modern maps. What teeming myriads are here! We learn three things.

The Oneness of the Human Race: “God hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on the face of the earth.” The slave that crouches in the African wood, the meanest outcast that creeps along in the dark, the veriest ruffian red-handed in crime—are bone of our bone, no less than the kings and saints, the prophets and martyrs.

The Wealth of our Saviour’s nature: He loved all; He gave Himself for all; He became the Propitiation for the sins of all; through Him all will rise; and He is able to satisfy all from His royal heart. “My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” There is not one child of man who may not find his consummation and bliss in Jesus, the One Man. All men are but broken lights of Him; and of all men that have ever lived He is the one flawless, sinless, perfect Man, the apex of the pyramid of humanity, the Head and Prince.

The warrant for Foreign Missions: If the races of mankind have sprung from a common stock, the experience of one is the key to all.

Each may learn from his own heart to estimate the hopes and fears, the yearnings and temptations, the weariness and sin-consciousness of the rest. The Gospel which has brought the blessing will do as much for each of those who bear, however obliterated, the print-mark of our race. “Go ye into all the world,

and preach the Gospel to every creature.”

August 11

Genesis 11:7

“Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech.”

GOD comes down into human life. Though the world is corrupt and full of violence; though His arch-enemy has taught man to dread and hate Him; though attempts are on foot to resist Him in open rebellion, by making a unity apart from Him, and in exclusion of His cornerstone, yet He comes down.

He comes down to see. He will not pronounce judgment till He has satisfied Himself by personal inspection how things stand. He comes down to our bedrooms, and overhears the words we speak, the deeds we do there; to our home-life, and is a silent listener and observer of all its incidents; to our shops, warehouses, and bank-parlours, auditing our accounts, casting up the columns, examining our samples, our weights and measures, our advertisements and circulars. From Him no secrets are hid.

He comes down to punish. “Let me alone, that I may destroy.”

(Deut 9:14) Never forget the punitive side of God’s character.

How easily He asserts His power! He can disorganize the memory, breathe on the brain, touch one small nerve or muscle,

and the best-concerted schemes fail. Why shouldst thou fear every day the fury of the oppressor, when God is at thy side! (Isa 51:13) He comes down to save. If there be one Lot, He will bring him forth. What was the Incarnation, the descent to Calvary and the grave, but the coming down of the “us” of the blessed Trinity. He that ascended is the same that also first descended. He has come that He may heal our wounds, take us in His arms, and bear us with Him far beyond all principality and power. He is the way, by which we may pass from the confusion of Babel to the love of Pentecost, and the one speech of heaven.

August 12

Genesis 12:1

“Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee:”

NEVER did a corn of wheat more utterly fall into the ground to die. It seemed as though he were urgently needed in his country and among his kindred; but man’s thoughts and ways are not God’s. The blessing of Abraham’s life could only come in the land of promise, and after he had died to the whole life of nature. To every one who is to be richly blessed and made a blessing there is the inevitable command, “Get thee out. Be willing to die.”

Get thee out of the land of idols. Beyond the flood of the Euphrates, Terah and the rest served other gods. Had Abram remained there, he might have touched the unclean thing; hence God’s desire to get him beyond the reach of infection, that he

and his race might remain monotheistic. Hast thou had communion with darkness, with Belial, with idols? Get thee out and be separate; touch not the unclean thing. Be clean, thou who art to bear the vessels of the Lord. Reckon thyself to have died.

Get thee out in loneliness. “I called him alone, and increased him.” If thou art unwilling to abide alone, thou must fall alone into the ground and die. God must reduce us to a minimum before He can work through us to the maximum. But there is also no loneliness to the soul who is one with God. Alone against the world, it is still in a majority.

Get thee out in faith. “He went out, not knowing whither.” It was what man calls a venture; but as he stepped out on what seemed a void, he found it rock beneath his feet. Day by day a track appeared across the desert, and all his needs were met till he reached the place of blessing. Death was the gate of life. Having died to Haran, he began to bring forth much fruit in every soil of the world.

August 13

Genesis 13:14

“And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward:”

ABRAM’S life was one of an ever-perfecting separation. But out of these experiences sprang his rarest joys. The separate and

obedient soul may reckon on:-

Fresh Revelation: Whenever Abram dared to step out in obedience, the Lord spake freshly to him. But in Egypt we find no trace of the Divine voice. If God spake there, it would be in warning and rebuke. Has the voice of God long been silent to thee—no fresh command, no deeper insight into truth? See to it that thou art not in Egypt. Separate thyself, not only from Haran, but from Lot; not only from what is clearly wrong, but from all that is questionable; and the Lord will speak to thee things it is not possible for men to utter.

Further Vision: Lot lifted up his eyes to espy what would make for his advantage and well-being, and beheld only the plain of Sodom, which indeed was well-watered, but the seat of exceeding sin. But when Abram lifted up his eyes, not to search out ought for himself, but to see what God had prepared, he looked northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward—words which remind us of the length, and breadth, and depth, and height of the love of Christ. The single eye is full of light; the far climber gets the widest horizon; if thou wilt do His will, thou shalt know.

Hundredfold Compensation: Whatever Abram renounced, when he left his home, or gave Lot the right to choose, he received back in the usual measure of God, with an overflowing overpass. God gave him the entire land, including Lot's portion. We can never give up for God, without receiving in this life more than we gave.

August 14

Genesis 14:19

“And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth:”

IT was to Melchizedek, the lonely king-priest living outside the busy rush of the world, that this new name of God was given.

There are some to whom God gives these direct revelations of Himself, that they may communicate them to others. These are our seers. This title for God, which Abram immediately appropriated, was the source -

Of Humility: To think of God as the Maker and Possessor of heaven and earth induces the profoundest humility of heaven.

“They cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou didst create all things.” How great God is! His greatness is unsearchable. Earth and heaven are His handiwork. Take time to think of this, but never forget that He is Love; then, with the familiarity of the child, thou wilt combine the lowly reverence of the creature.

Of Steadfastness in the hour of temptation: When the king of Sodom desired Abram to share in the spoils of the kings, setting before him a most subtle temptation, and one which might have dragged him from the life and walk of faith, Abram fell back on the revelation of God just vouchsafed to him, and said in effect: “What need is there that I should do this thing, or receive of thy gold? All God is mine; in God all things are mine also. What I need He will assuredly give. What He withholds I will receive from no other source.” There is no need for us to get wealth wrongly; God can supply all we need.

Of Security: God owns all; all the earth is His empire; wherever we travel we are within His dominion, breathe His air, are

ministered to by His angels. We have a right to the best in all good things, since they are our Father's, and we are heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ.

August

August 15

Genesis 15:17

“And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces.”

FIRE is the chosen emblem of God; and as these fire-emblems

passed slowly between the divided carcasses it was as though God accommodated Himself to the methods of human oath-taking, and solemnly bound Himself. But in all His dealings with us He is prepared to be both a furnace and a torch.

God as a Furnace. — Take up a piece of iron ore, and see how the metal is scattered amid commoner substances. How can it be disintegrated? The chisel cannot do it, but fire will. Plunge it now into the fire; let it fall in the heart of the glowing furnace, and presently the stream of liquid metal will issue forth, pure and beautiful. It is thus that God deals with human hearts; the blood makes propitiation, but the fire cleanses. The love of God, the purity of God, the spirituality of God brought home to us by the Holy Ghost, search and try us to the innermost fiber of our being, and burn out of us the evils which had long held empire.

Refining Fire, go through my heart, Illuminate my soul;

Scatter thy life through every part, And sanctify the whole.

God as a flaming Torch. — The torch guides the footsteps through the dark; and God's Spirit waits to shed light on many dark and hidden things, and to guide us into all the truth. It is one thing to comprehend by the intellect; it is altogether another to apprehend by the heart. There is no such teacher as God; and the mistake of our modern religious life is to receive so much from man, instead of waiting in rapt silence until God Himself communicates his truth to us. The conditions are purity of desire, cleanness of heart, and willingness to obey.

August 16

Genesis 16:9

“And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands.”

POOR Hagar! No wonder that she fled. Her proud Arab independence and the sense of coming motherhood made her rebel against Sarah's hard dealings. We have often meditated flight, if we have not actually fled from intolerable conditions. Of course, when God opens the door out of a dungeon we need not hesitate, as Peter did, to rise and follow. But this is very different to flight from the post of duty.

Our Cross. — For Hagar, Sarah; for Hannah, Penninah; for David, Joab; for Jesus, Judas; for Paul, Alexander the coppersmith.

Life assumes hard and forbidding aspects. Sometimes the cross is not a person, but a trial — the pressure of a slow and lingering disease; the demand for grinding and persistent toil; the weight

of overmastering anxiety for those dearer than life, who have no knowledge of God.

Our Demeanor. — Return and submit. We are apt to suppose that we shall get rest and peace elsewhere. It is not so, however.

Nowhere else shall we find the path less rugged, or the pillow less hard. To evade the yoke will not give us heart's ease. The Master's advice is that we shall take His yoke, and bear it as He did; remain where God has put us, till He shows us another place; and bear what He ordains and permits, even though it comes through the means of others.

Our Faith. — We cannot patiently submit to our lot unless we believe that what God permits is as much His will as what He appoints. Behind Sarah's hard dealings we must behold His permissive providence. Through all the discipline of life we must believe that God has a purpose of unfailing love and wisdom. Then our submission is not stoicism, but loving acquiescence in our Father's will.

August 17

Genesis 17:1

“And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.”

GOD precedes his commands with such revelations of Himself, that obedience is rendered easily possible. Before calling Abram

to perfection, He described himself as El Shaddai, the Almighty. What may we not do if we learn to avail ourselves of the all might of God? Oh to know the exceeding greatness of his power toward us who believe! Our lack is that we do not know our God, and therefore fail to perform exploits. “Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me.” Lie on thy face, and let God talk with thee, and tell thee the conditions on which He will make thee exceeding fruitful. First — Walk before Me: Second — Be thou whole-hearted.

There must be wholeness in our surrender. — No part of our nature barred or curtained off from God. Every chamber must be freely placed at His disposal; every relationship placed under His direction; every power devoted to His service. All we have and are must be entirely His.

There must be wholeness in our intention. — The one aim of our Lord was to bring glory to His Father; and we should never be satisfied till we are so absolutely eager for the glory of Christ that we would seek it though at the cost of infamy to ourselves; and be as glad for another to bring it to Him, as we should be in bringing it ourselves.

There must be wholeness in our obedience. — It was clearly so with Abram. As soon as God left talking with His servant, He took Isaac and performed the rite which had just been enjoined.

August 18

Genesis 18:23

“And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?”

THE patriarch’s attitudes are well worthy of note: he sat (Genesis 18:1), bowed (Genesis 18:2), ran (Genesis 18:7), stood by (Genesis 18:8), went with them (Genesis 18:16), stood before the Lord (Genesis 18:22); here, he drew near.

He drew near with awful reverence. — “I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes.” The place whereon he stood was holy ground; and if he trod or crossed it, in the intensity of his desire, he never forgot that the most intimate fellowship of man with God must be mingled with the reverence of godly fear, which remembers that He is a consuming fire.

He drew near in faith. — He had enjoyed a blessed prevision of the day of Christ. There had been revealed to him that one perfect and sufficient Sacrifice, in virtue of which sinners are welcome to draw near to God. They have boldness to enter the holiest, and draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, who know the new and living way which Jesus has opened for us.

He drew near as intercessor. — We never get so near God as when we plead for others. At such times we enter the holiest and innermost chamber, and talk to Him with an urgency which we dare not use for ourselves. Whilst the Syrophenician pleaded for her daughter, she came to the very feet of Jesus. Wouldst thou know the inner chamber? Go thither on errands for others.

He drew near in intensity. — When Haman pleaded for his life, he fell on the Queen’s couch in the anguish of his soul. Sometimes God appears to hesitate; it is only to draw us on, ever further and deeper, till we awake to find ourselves alone in His presence.

August 19

Genesis 19:27

“And Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the LORD:”

THERE was not much sleep that night for this loyal heart! With the spring of day he was where, probably, Lot, years before, had looked on the face of the country, and beheld it as a garden of the Lord. But how great the contrast! The smoke of the land went up as the smoke of a furnace!

Have a place where you stand before God. — It may not always be to speak to Him, but to be spoken to, to be judged, to have the motives and intentions of the heart winnowed and sifted. Well is it to stand each day before the judgment-seat of Christ, and to receive His verdict on our innermost life. Oh that the grass of that trysting-place may be well worn through our frequent intercourse with our beloved Lord!

Follow up your prayers. — Abraham was not content with shooting arrows into the air; he followed them to see how they sped, and where they fell. We do not need to reiterate our petitions with unbelieving monotony, as though they were not safe in God’s keeping; but we should remind Him by our upward look that our expectation is from Him.

View the fate of the ungodly from God’s standpoint. — We are apt to consider it from that of our own pity, or commiseration, or tolerance of shortcoming. We judge lightly, because we dread too searching a judgment on ourselves. But we need sometimes to see sin as God sees it. Stand on Calvary and learn what sin is, and how much it has cost the Savior. There, too, you will learn

that God goes further than his servants' prayers. Though He may not be able to discover the ten, yet He will deliver the one righteous man. "His countenance doth behold the upright."

August 20

Genesis 20:6

"And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her."

AS we review our lives, we can see many occasions on which our feet had well-nigh gone — our steps were on the very brink of the precipice. Another inch, and we should have brought shame on Christ and lasting remorse to ourselves. To what can we attribute our escape but to the grace of God, which withheld us, even though we failed to recognize it?

He does not withhold us from temptation. — He could not do so without serious and permanent loss. The waves of ink will surge up against the white marble palace of the soul. To us, as to our Lord, fresh from under the opened heavens, the tempter will come. What the fire is in fixing the color on the porcelain vase, that temptation is in rendering permanent the lessons and impressions made by God's providence and grace.

He does not withhold us from occasions in which it would be easy to transgress. — Abimelech was not hindered from taking Sarah into his palace. The door of occasion and opportunity stood open before him; but he was withheld from the fatal act.

We must never infer that occasion confers license. The fact of an opportunity being present does not warrant indulgence in wrongdoing.

If God withheld Abimelech, who did not seek His special help, how much more those that seek Him! — You are not insensible of the perils of your life; but wait earnestly and persistently on God.

Are you more eager to be kept than He to keep? Did He not implant that desire? Will He not do exceeding abundantly above what we ask or think? Is not the good Shepherd strong enough to keep one poor trembling sheep? Begone, unbelief! My God whom I serve is able to deliver, and He will! (Daniel 3:17).

August 21

Genesis 21:19

“And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink.”

POOR Hagar! There was no help for it; and she, who a little before had thought she was giving Abraham his heir, found herself and her boy homeless wayfarers on the desert sands. Their one need was water; they little deemed it was so near. No need to create a new fountain, but to open their eyes. We need the opened eye to see:— The finished work of Christ. — The work of propitiation for sin is complete. We are not required to add to it one tear, or prayer, or vow. “It is finished.” To go to heaven to bring Christ down, or to the deep to bring Him up, is alike superfluous. All we need is the opened eye to see what

Jesus has done, and recognize that it is all that was demanded to meet the claims of God's holy law.

The things freely given to us of God. — God hath given us in Jesus all things that pertain to life and godliness. There is no possible gift or grace, in which we are deficient, that is not stored in Him, in whom the fullness of God abides. But we are blind; the eyes of our heart have not been opened to see the hope of our calling, the riches of our inheritance, the greatness of God's power. Did we know these things, surely not a moment would elapse without our availing ourselves of God's rich provision.

The alleviations which God provides against excessive sorrow.

— Hagar's anguish, as Mary's at the sepulcher in after years, blinded her to available comfort. So grief puts a bandage over our eyes. Life is sad, and lonely, and dark, but God is near and if you ask, He will show springs of consolation of which you may drink.

There is no desert without its spring; no dying child without the angel of the Lord.

August

August 22

Genesis 22:14

“And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovahjireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen.”

ABRAHAM knew it would be. Probably he never told Sarah what God had asked of him till he and the lad were safely back in the tent. What need to trouble her? Her weak faith could not have stood the ordeal. It was with an unfaltering tone that the patriarch told his young men that they two would presently return.

Even though he should actually take Isaac's life, he was sure that he would receive him again from the altar in health. It was only at the very last moment that God indicated the ram as the sufficient substitute. So God's deliverances always come; they are provided in the mount of trial and sacrifice.

When the foe seems secure of victory. — So it was with Israel.

Pharaoh, with his hosts, counted on an easy victory, the precipices around, the sea in front. To the eye of sense it seemed impossible to escape: all hope died. It was just then that the Almighty cleft a path through the mighty deep.

“In the fourth hour of the night.” — Strength was well-nigh exhausted in long battling with the waves. For hours the disciples with difficulty had kept themselves afloat. It seemed as if they must give in through physical collapse. It was then that

the form of Jesus drew nigh unto the ship.

On the night before execution. — Thus Peter lies sleeping whilst the Church is gathered in prayer. Tomorrow he will be a corpse. But the angel comes then to open the prison doors.

So you may have come to an end of your own strength, and wisdom, and energy. The altar, wood, and fire are ready, the knife upraised, your Isaac on the point to die: but even now God will provide. Trust Him to indicate the way of escape.

August 23

Genesis 23:4

“I am a stranger and a sojourner with you: give me a possession of a buryingplace with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight.”

THE minute details of this purchase are recorded to emphasize the fact that, though the whole land was Abraham's by the Divine gift, he would not enter on its possession until God's time was come. We may be sure of certain blessings — ours in God's safe keeping — though they are withheld until the moment that His wisdom sees best. It was a touching confession. The aged patriarch had for long years owned no settled dwelling-place. After years in the land of promise he was still without land enough for a grave.

Faith cannot be satisfied with the things of this world. — The sons of Heth had goods and lands, but Abraham did not envy

them; he had caught a glimpse of the city which hath foundations, and this so satisfied and attracted him that he had no desire for aught that Palestine could yield.

Faith detaches us from the present. — We are content to dwell in tents, because here we have no abiding place. The shows and vanities of the world, in comparison with the vision of eternal realities, are as the glare of the streets compared with the steady glory of the constellations of the night.

Faith prompts to confession. — It bewrayeth itself. We should be careful and orderly in our business arrangements; but, in our dealings with our fellows, in our justice, fairness, honor, the lightness of our hold on the present world, we should make it manifest that we are seeking a country not our own.

Faith cannot be ashamed. — The God who prompted it must satisfy it, else He would have reason to be ashamed of having failed the souls that trusted Him. But now He is not ashamed to be called our God, because He has prepared for us a city.

August 24

Genesis 24:12

“And he said, O LORD God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto my master Abraham.”

THIS worthy man, Eliezer, the steward of Abraham’s house, was almost garrulous about his master. Count up the number of times

in which he contrives to bring in the two words, “my master.”

We may learn from him how to speak of our Master, whenever we get the opportunity. “Rabboni, which being interpreted is, My Master.”

We too can speak of the Lord God as our Master. — The servant did not know Jehovah directly; it was enough that he had seen and heard Abraham pray to Him. This encouraged him to draw near for himself. So we are emboldened to draw near, because God is the God and Father of our Master Jesus. We love Him that was begotten, and are attracted to Him of whom Jesus said, “I ascend to my Father, and your Father; to my God, and your God.”

We, too, can plead for our Master’s sake. — When asking for good speed to be sent to himself, he alleged as his plea that it would be showing kindness to his master Abraham. So when we ask great things from God, we can plead in the name of Jesus, and urge that in answering our petition God will be showing kindness to his Well-beloved.

We, too, should bless in our Master’s name. — When the answer was given, this reverent soul gave thanks as though the favor had been shown to his master. Indeed, all through his intercourse with Bethuel and Laban he seems to have lost his identity in Abraham.

He could talk of nothing else but that one scheme; was only eager to carry his point for his master’s sake; and when the errand was done, longed only to get back to his master’s side. It is a beautiful lesson for those who call Jesus Master and Lord.

August 25

Genesis 25:33

“And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob.”

EVERY one is born with a birthright, which the devil tries hard to make him barter away for a mess of pottage. In that birthright are included:— Innocence and purity. — The child of the vilest ancestry enters this world unsullied by the filthy touch of unclean habit. But how eager Satan is to induce us to part with this for his unsatisfying pleasure.

The love of our kind. — Few are the children, of all the myriads of our race, that are not loved by some fond heart. In some cases the infant life is cradled in love. But Satan is glad when he can get the soul to break away from all earthly affection, which might possibly soften and refine it, and to renounce mother, sister, wife, child, for the drunkard’s cup, the wanton’s kiss.

The redemption of Jesus Christ. — Every one is born into a redeemed world; the propitiation of the blessed Lord, the blood that flowed on Calvary, the canceling of the effects of Adam’s sin, are for all. As all the world was affected by Adam’s sin, so all are included in God’s love in Jesus. But again Satan is eager to induce men to abjure and cast away these benefits; he blinds the eyes of those that believe not, so that they refuse to “behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”

The grace of the Spirit. — Every one may build up a strong and beautiful character by yielding to the Holy Ghost’s gracious promptings. That grace knocks, like sunshine, at the windows of every soul; but how often it is sold for a mess of pottage! The choice between these two is constantly being presented to us. God help us always to choose the divine, the spiritual, the

eternal!

August 26

Genesis 26:5

“Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.”

IT is awful to realize how our sins may repeat themselves in our children. Here is Isaac following in the precise steps of Abraham, who had acted in a similar manner towards Sarah when entering Egypt. In each case there was a sad lapse of faith; but it was even worse for Isaac, with Abraham’s example to warn him.

But a man may pass blessings on to his children, as well as the sad entail of evil habits.

He leaves the blessing of the divine covenant. — God had entered into covenant with Abraham, and was prepared to fulfill its provisions to his son. “I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee.” So a godly ancestor may be able to secure for all his seed a share in the divine grace and favor. The spirit that is put on him does not depart from his seed, or his seed’s seed for ever.

The blessing of his prayer. — It is impossible to over-estimate the effect of a good man’s prayers; they are as streams or trees, which go on flowing and bearing fruit long after they were originated. The legacy of a good man’s prayers is of priceless worth. He may have long since passed to his rest; but God

remembers them, and answers them in blessings to the next generation. How often in this chapter we read that “God blessed Isaac.”

The blessing of a noble name. — We may all leave that, if we can transmit nothing else. To have had a father that knew God, walked with God, pleased God; who was on intimate terms with Him, and could speak to Him, as a man with his friend — illumined the ordinary nature and existence of Isaac with unearthly beauty. Let us live so that our children may be ranked as nobles, because they bear our name.

August 27

Genesis 27:34

“And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also, O my father.”

ON this incident the writer to the Hebrews found the impressive lesson, that the choices of the past may cast a bitter and irrevocable shadow on all our future. When he afterward desired to inherit blessing he was rejected; for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears (Hebrews 12:16–17).

Beware of the cravings of appetite. — In an evil moment Esau yielded to these, and sold his birthright to secure their gratification; he found afterwards that the choice made in that hour was irrevocable. How needful that we watch and pray, lest

we fall into temptation!

There are four facts which, when borne in mind, guard us against the sudden oversetting of passionate appetite.

We were once dead in sins. — Surely we do not want to go back again to the charnel-house with its corruption.

We died for sins in the person of Christ our Representative. — In Him we have met the demands of God's holy law; but surely that must be an awful thing which cost our Savior so dearly.

We died to sin with the Lord Jesus. — We have passed with Him on to Resurrection ground; so that we belong to the new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

We are called on to reckon ourselves dead to sin. — The nearer we live to God, the more sensitive we shall be to the most distant suggestion of evil, closing doors and windows against its entrance, reckoning ourselves "not at home" to it, and yielding our members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

August 28

Genesis 28:12

"And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it."

ALL men feel that earth and heaven touch at the horizons of the

distant past and future; but we ought to feel that the present moment of time and this bit of the world's surface are linked with heaven. This is what the ladder meant for Jacob. The moorland waste, where he lay, and Laban's home, whither he journeyed, were as near God as his father's tent. Earth is linked with heaven:— By God's daily providence. — His loving eye is ever upon us, his ears always open to our cry, and his angels go to and fro on our world performing ceaseless ministries.

By our Savior's mediation. — As He intimated to Nathanael, His own nature as uniting God with man, and especially His Ascension glory as the man Christ Jesus, is the one great connecting link.

“Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.”

By daily fellowship and holy thought. — We should practice the sense of God's presence, often stopping ourselves amid our ordinary avocations and interests to say, aloud when possible, “God is near, God is here.” In all likelihood we are daily living amid the glories of the eternal world; but our eyes are blinded. Oh that by humility and purity we may become more sensitive, and awake to the things that are unseen and eternal! Lord, open our eyes, that we may see!

(2 Kings 6:17).

By holy yearning. — When Jesus ascended, He unrolled a path behind Him, along which we shall one day travel to meet Him.

Hope treads that glorious Ascension ladder; and as she does so, again we see the heaven opened, and our destiny unfolded at Christ's right hand.

August 29

Genesis 29:20

“And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her.”

THAT touch is enough! We can fill in all the rest. This old-world love was of the same quality as our own. Oh, blessed God!

What a priceless inheritance this is! Time itself never tedious, but always too short; labor never hard; distance never long; sacrifice unheard of, the word almost in disuse — where Love is queen. This is how we would feel to our dear Lord: so that the missionary away from home and friends, as well as the invalid suffering for Jesus, might feel years of loneliness and pain but a few days, for love of the beloved Master. We may acquire such love thus:— Meditate much on the love of Jesus. — Sit with the Apostle beneath his cross, and say, each time with deeper appreciation: He loved me, He gave Himself for me. Do not think of your love to Him, but of His. It is well to take the Lord’s Supper frequently, as affording opportunities for remembering His dying love.

Be on the alert to detect His love in daily providence and trifles.

— It is amazing how much is ever being arranged by His tender thoughtfulness to alleviate and brighten our lot. If you cannot detect it, dare still to believe it.

Ask the Holy Spirit to breathe His love into your heart. — He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit; and when the doors are open between Christ and the soul, the aroma of His love freely enters.

Show His love to every one. — Whether you like people or not, do to them as He would do; let His love flow through you to them; what we manifest to others for His sake, we shall come to feel towards Him, and them also. “This commandment have we from Him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.”

August 30

Genesis 30:27

“And Laban said unto him, I pray thee, if I have found favour in thine eyes, tarry: for I have learned by experience that the LORD hath blessed me for thy sake.”

LABAN requested the longer stay of Jacob because he felt sure that the Divine blessings had been brought by him into his home. It was a selfish, low, motive for desiring the postponement of his departure; and Laban was destined, alas! to be terribly undeceived. He would wake up one day, to find that during his sojourn with him, and under the cloak of religion, Jacob had been ruthlessly plundering his property. It was a shameful betrayal of trust on Jacob's part; and it conveys a searching warning to those who, because of their religious professions, are trusted by their relatives or others:— With their property. — Always do the best possible for your employer or friend, who has entrusted his interests to you, acting towards him as the servant and steward of God. Bear in mind that God has bidden you undertake the office for Himself, and accepts your fidelity as rendered to Him: He will recompense.

With their friendship. — Be very careful here. God puts us into

one another's lives, that we may be the medium through which His love and tenderness may enter them; but there is such danger of our monopolizing for ourselves the place that He would fill. Sometimes we almost unconsciously deteriorate rather than elevate our friends by the intrusion of our own personality.

With their Christian instruction and training. — Ministers of God's holy gospel must specially guard against the tendency to make name, fame, money, out of a position which they should occupy only as God's stewards. There is such subtleness in the temptation to attract men to ourselves, instead of attaching them to Christ.

August 31

Genesis 31:24

“And God came to Laban the Syrian in a dream by night, and said unto him, Take heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad.”

THIS visitation of God made a deep impression on Laban. He refers to it afterwards as restraining him from injuring his runaway son-in-law. Jacob, too, was struck by it. It is very wonderful to find the Holy God casting the mantle of His protection around this crafty and deceitful soul. No doubt it was due to His covenant relationship with the family and race, of which Jacob was a most unworthy member (Genesis 31:13, 42). But if God thus interposed for Jacob, will He not much more interpose for those who desire to be His obedient children?

God will lay an arrest on your persecutors. — Israel was rebuked because the exiles in Babylon thought they would perish before a man that could die, and the son of man who was as grass, and forgot their Maker, the Lord of heaven and earth. All around you the fire may rage; but you shall walk amid it unscathed, if only you trust.

No weapon formed against you shall prosper.

God will lay an arrest on trial. — His finger is always on our pulse; and the moment the pain becomes more than we can bear, He will stay it. His eye is ever upon His own.

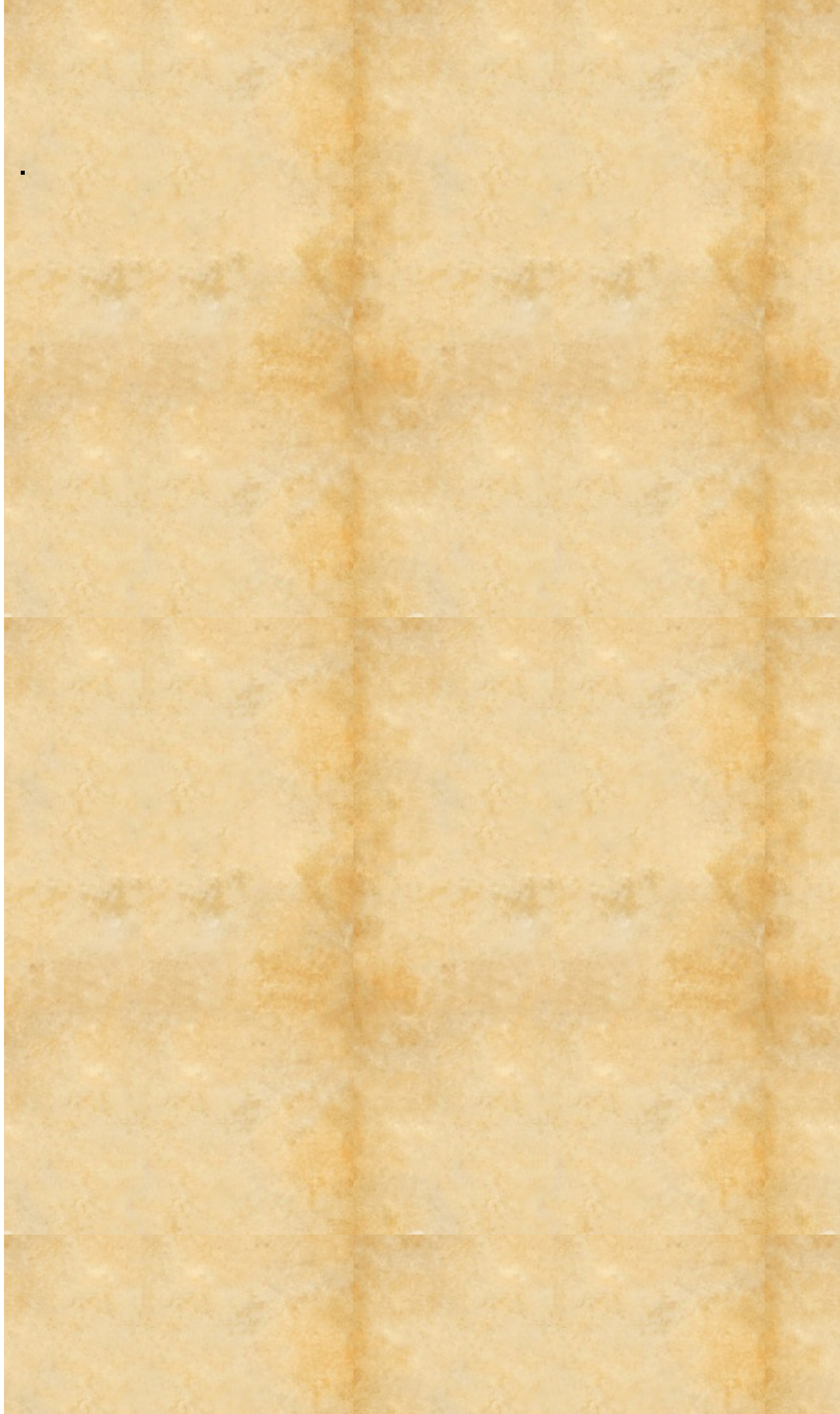
God will lay an arrest on the power of the evil one. — We shall not be tempted beyond that we are able to bear. There is always a thus far and no farther. “The Lord maketh a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters.” The Only-begotten of the Father keeps the sheep whom his Father has entrusted to Him. Not one of them can be devoured by the lion of hell. If only we believed this, we should be calmer, happier, even though circumstanced as Jacob. No need to altercation with Laban, but to look beyond him to the “Fear of Isaac.”

Our Daily Homily

By

F.B. Meyer

- 1. September 1st through 4th**
- 2. September 5th through 11th**
- 3. September 12th through 18th**
- 4. September 19th through 30th**



September

September 1

Genesis 32:25

“And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob’s thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him.”

OUR greatest victories are wrought out through pain, and purchased at the cost of the humbling of the flesh. Jacob learned that the secret of prevailing with God and man was not in the strength, but in the weakness and suffering of the flesh. It must ever be so. The victor Lamb bears still the scars of Calvary, and appears as one who had been slain.

Had Laban met Jacob that morning, he would have pointed to that limp as an indication of God’s wrath and displeasure; but if he had looked into his face, he would have seen all its hardness and cunning gone, and would have been arrested by the unwonted tenderness in his voice.

The shrunken sinew counteracts pride. — So high a spiritual achievement as to prevail with God might have tempted Jacob to arrogance and self-esteem. But God anticipated the possible temptation by this physical infirmity, which was constantly present to Jacob’s consciousness.

The shrunken sinew was the secret of victory. — Had it not been shriveled by the angel’s touch, Jacob would have continued to resist in the pride of his strength, and would never have clung convulsively to the angel, crying, “I will not let thee go.” It was

only in that act that he became Israel, the Prince.

The shrunken sinew makes us think little of this world and much of the next. — From this moment Jacob takes up more of the pilgrim attitude. He finds that for him, at least, the pace will have to be slower; but it is well, for he relaxes his hold on the seen to entwine more tenaciously about the unseen. “The days of the years of my pilgrimage” — such is his epitome of his life.

September 2

Genesis 33:14

“Let my lord, I pray thee, pass over before his servant: and I will lead on softly, according as the cattle that goeth before me and the children be able to endure, until I come unto my lord unto Seir.”

THIS was rather unworthy of the man who, the night before, had seen the face of God, and learned to prevail. The man who had seen God, and prevailed, was doubtful of his newly-given blessing!

He did not realize that it would carry him through the difficulty that threatened him. He had not as yet learned to apply it to every emergency. It is a solemn lesson to those who have passed through some rapturous experience.

After blessing, often trial. — When the fair colors have been laid on, the vessel is plunged into the furnace, that they may be burnt in.

The trial frequently presents itself in the home or ordinary life. — Some are led into the wilderness to be tempted; but more often it is the contact with our Esaus that furnishes us with the supreme test of the worth of what we have received.

Failure comes from not reckoning on God. — Jacob looked at Esau's four hundred armed men, and compared his own following with despair. So Peter looked at the winds and waves. At such times we must fail, if we rely on schemes or plans, instead of saying, God is.

Oh for the peace that floweth as a river, Making life's desert places bloom and smile; Oh for the faith to grasp Heaven's bright "for ever" And the shadow of earth's "little while."

We must act in faith. — If Jacob had refused to use this subterfuge, and had spoken simply and manfully, he would have found that Esau would have acquiesced and left him. The angels who had gone forward to deal with him (Genesis 32:2) had done their work effectively, and God had changed his purpose.

September 3

Genesis 34:30

"And Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, Ye have troubled me to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites: and I being few in number, they shall gather themselves together against me, and slay me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my house."

THE Bible does not hesitate to hold the mirror up to our fallen nature, or show us what we are. Here is Israel, the prince with God, who had power with man, in a very sorry plight. His children

had involved him in it; but first, he had involved them.

Dinah. — Little did she realize all the evil which that visit of hers would bring on her people and on those whose guest she was. What took her there? Had her upbringing been unnecessarily strict, and did she want a little more freedom? There is an inevitable rebound with young people to the other extreme, if needless severity has been brought to bear on them in their early days.

The probability, however, is that the laxity of her father's home, and the effect of her mother's gods, had made the line of separation a very faint one, and she felt no difficulty in overstepping it.

Simeon and Levi. — "Ye have made me to stink." On his dying bed Jacob remembered this treacherous cruelty and pronounced their scattering in Israel; though Levi undid the effect of that bitter curse by his obedience and devotion. In after days it was said, "My covenant was with him of life and peace," and though scattered, he was as salt. In Simeon's case the curse was not cancelled by any subsequent manifestation of obedience and devotion, and ran out its course. There is encouragement and warning here.

Jacob. — The real mistake of it all was that Jacob bought that land, and settled too near the city (Genesis 33:18). As a pilgrim he had no right to do this. If Christian parents will settle down in fellowship with the world, they have themselves to thank for all the misery which accrues to themselves and children, and the dishonor to God.

September 4

Genesis 35:1

“And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother.”

GOD had set His hand to make Jacob a saint. He had given him a glimpse of his ideal at the Jabbok ford, but his nature was not then capable of taking in the Divine conception; and, as we have seen, both in his subterfuge to Esau and his settling outside Shechem, he had fallen back into the schemer and money-maker. In this chapter God uses several methods of awakening and renewal.

The Divine summons. — “Arise, go up to Bethel.” He had been in the lowlands too long: too long had he “lain among the pots.”

The voice of God spoke words of resurrection life into his grave, as afterwards into that of Lazarus.

The power of old association. — What memories clustered around that name and place of Bethel! It recalled his distress and fear; the angel-ladder, and the comforting assurance which had inspired him with new hope. Directly he heard it, he seemed to have felt the incongruity of the life that was being lived in his camp, and he said to his people, “Put away the strange gods ... Arise, let us go up to Bethel, and I will make there an altar unto God.”

A fresh revelation. — God appeared to him again. For long there had been no vision of God; but now that the idols were put away, his eyes were opened to see Him who had been beside him amid all his backslidings.

Death. — Deborah, the beloved Rachel, the old father — one after another were taken from him; and there came the far-away look into his eyes which showed that he had imbibed the pilgrim-spirit

and had become Israel the Prince. So God stripped him that he might be better able to run the race set before him.

September

September 5

Genesis 36:31

“And these are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel.”

APPARENTLY Esau had the best and happiest lot.

What he escaped. — For him there were no few and evil days of pilgrimage; nor the pressure of famine; nor the going down into Egypt; nor the forty years of wanderings in the desert; nor the vicissitudes of the Judges. All these he escaped — and must have congratulated himself merrily. But he had no vision of God; no communion with Jehovah; no contact with the messengers of heaven.

What he enjoyed. — A line of dukes; a royal dynasty, which was old when Israel's first king ascended the throne; a rich and fertile territory; peace and comfort. He reminds us of the Psalmist's picture of the man of this world, whose portion is in this life, and who is filled with hid treasure. But Esau never awoke satisfied with God's likeness; nor ever enjoyed the blessedness of the man who is “a prince with God.”

How he bore himself. — His heart was generous, full of good nature, jovial, and free-handed. When the land could not bear both Jacob and himself, he went off into another, and settled

down in Mount Seir. It was no hardship with him to leave the land of promise. Most would, doubtless, have preferred his society to Jacob's; but God did not (Malachi 1:2–3).

What made the lot of these brothers so different. — The one lived for the world; the other was a citizen of the heavenly Jerusalem, a pilgrim to the City of God. The one was an ordinary man of the world; the other had been selected of God as the channel of blessing to mankind. The flower and fruit which are to be propagated require the special attention of the gardener's knife. What solemn words!

September 6

Genesis 37:24

“And they took him, and cast him into a pit: and the pit was empty, there was no water in it.”

IT is impossible to read this inimitable story without detecting in the water-mark of the paper on which it is written the name Jesus. Indeed, we lose much of the beauty and force of these early Scriptures if we fail to observe the references to the life, character, and work of the blessed Redeemer. Notice some of these precious analogies:— Our Savior's shepherd-heart (Genesis 37:2).

The love of the Father before the worlds were made (Genesis 37:3).

The dreams of empire, which are so certainly to be realized, when we shall see Him acknowledged as King of kings and Lord of lords (Genesis 37:7).

Envied by his brethren, to whom he came, though they received Him not (Genesis 37:11).

His alacrity to do his Father's will, and to finish his work, in which will we too have been sanctified (Genesis 37:13).

Cast into the pit of the grave, as a seed-corn into the ground to die, that He might not abide alone, but bear much fruit (Genesis 37:24).

The thirty pieces of silver for which He was betrayed (Genesis 37:28).

The indifference of the Jewish people to their great Brother's fate (Genesis 37:25).

Rejected of the Jew, and turning to the Gentile (Genesis 37:28).

The bitter grief which his rejection has brought on the Jewish people (Genesis 37:35).

It is as though the Holy Ghost, eager to glorify the Lord, could not wait for the slow unfolding of history, but must anticipate the story of that precious life and death which were to make the world new again.

September 7

Genesis 38:1

"And it came to pass at that time, that Judah went down from his brethren, and turned in to a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah."

THIS was the destined heir of the birthright of which Reuben had shown himself unworthy; and yet this chapter is a dark story of his unbridled passion. O my soul, remember that the possibilities of all these sins are latent in thee! Thou mightest have been as one of these men or women but for the grace of God.

There is nothing so absolutely priceless as the white flower of a pure and blameless life. The pure in heart are the children of the presence-chamber — entrusted with secrets hidden from the wise and prudent — vessels by which God does not hesitate to quench the thirst of men, because the water of the crystal river will not be diluted or contaminated by contact with their natures. Above all other gifts, covet that of a cleansed heart. You may be very conscious of temptation, and that naturally you are no better than others, and yet if you will constantly live in the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit, you will be kept absolutely pure; and the sea of ink that is sweeping through the world will leave no stain on you.

The blood cleanseth: “The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).

The Savior keepeth: “The Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil” (2 Thessalonians 3:3).

The Spirit filleth: “Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?” (1 Corinthians 6:19).

God can take in hand the Judahs amongst us, and so deal with them as to produce such a character as is forth shadowed in Genesis 49:8.

September 8

Genesis 39:9

“There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?”

WHAT a contrast between this chapter and the former: that, like a Rembrandt background, throws up the bright colors of this. Where the older brother fell, the younger stood victoriously; and the light of God shone on the young heart, so that even the dungeon gloom could not extinguish it. Who does not know what it is to be misunderstood, misrepresented, accused falsely, and punished wrongfully! Yet God reigns: and in his own time “He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noon-day.”

God allows strength to be tested. — We do not know what we are, or where we stand, till we are compelled to choose. Insensibly character is ever forming — unconsciously we are taking sides; but the testing-hour that compels us to declare ourselves causes the solution suddenly to crystallize, and we know ourselves in our choice. The man who has chosen the pure and good once, will choose them more easily next time; and at each choice will become stronger.

God allows virtue to be Maligned. — In all Egypt there was not a purer soul, and yet Joseph lay under a terrible imputation; but he committed his cause to God, sure that He would not leave him in Hades; and the time came when the King’s word cleared him, and he stood forth vindicated. “Fret not thyself. Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him.”

God allows conscientiousness to be ill-repaid. — Of what avail that he had so well cared for his master’s goods? Ah, but that dungeon was the subterranean passage to a throne; and through those fetters iron entered into that young soul. We all need more iron in our blood!

September 9

Genesis 40:7

“And he asked Pharaoh’s officers that were with him in the ward of his lord’s house, saying, Wherefore look ye so sadly to day?”

WE may learn from Joseph the true method of bearing grief.

Joseph might have become moody and sullen, absorbed in his own misfortunes, and pessimistic about the course of human life.

How far removed from all this was his behavior!

He filled his time with ministry. — The captain of the guard charged him with two state-prisoners, and he ministered unto them.

A new interest came into his life, and he almost forgot the heavy pressure of his own troubles amid the interest of listening to the tales of those who were more unfortunate than himself. Do not nurse your grief in lonely brooding arise and minister to some one; do something in the world; exert yourself to alleviate the sufferings of those close by your side, who have not so clear a conscience or so bright a trust in God.

He was quick to sympathize and comfort. — Quick to notice traces of sorrow, because he had sorrowed; able to sympathize, because he had wept; adept at comforting, because he had been comforted of God. We gain comfort when we attempt to comfort.

Out of such intercourse we get what Joseph got — the key which will unlock the heavy doors by which we have been shut in. Light a fire in another’s heart, and your own heart will be warmed.

He kept his faith in God. — Depression, captivity, loneliness, separation from those he loved, could not quench his faith in God.

Still God was near and precious to him. The stifling darkness and oppression of the prison were irksome to the free child of the camp; but God was as near as in Jacob's tent. There is no evil to them that love God; and the believer loses sight of second causes in the contemplation of the unfolding of the mystery of his Father's will.

September 10

Genesis 41:16

“And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace.”

IT is beautiful to notice Joseph's reverent references to God in his first interview with Pharaoh. When the heart is full of God, the tongue will be almost obliged to speak of Him; and all such references will be easy and natural as flowers in May.

These words might have been uttered by the Lord Jesus. They are so perfectly in harmony with the tenor of His life. He loved to say that His words, and works, and plans, were not His own, but the Father's. Once, when a ruler called Him good, He reminded him that only One was good, and that all goodness was derived from God. Men knew little enough of Jesus, because He sought ever to be a reflecting mirror for His Father, and to glorify Him on the earth. But the Spirit reveals Him to those that love.

These words might have been the Apostle Paul's. He delighted to

say that he worked, yet not he, but the grace of God in him; that he lived, yet not he, but Christ in him; that he knew and spake the mysteries of God, yet not he, but the Spirit of God.

Thus we should speak. Our light must so shine that men may turn from us to Him from whom we have derived it. Whenever the temptation arises to revert on ourselves, to attract men to ourselves, to lead them to think that we can meet their need, let us count ourselves dead to the suggestion, saying, “It is not in me; God shall give” (Acts 3:12). What strength and comfort come into our hearts, in view of demands which are too great for our weak nature to meet.

“It is not in me; God shall give.” If our hearts were indicting a good matter, they would boil over, and we should speak more frequently of the things that touch our King.

September 11

Genesis 42:30

“The man, who is the lord of the land, spake roughly to us, and took us for spies of the country.”

HE spake roughly, but he did not feel so. — When he had

spoken in these harsh tones, he restored their money; turned aside to weep (Genesis 42:24); and did his best to alleviate the toils of travel. So sometimes God seems to deal harshly, and speak roughly; but there is no change in the tender love of his heart. It costs Him immeasurably more than it does us. Often when some unusual severity has been evinced, if we could but see his face, it would be full of pity, pain, and pleading on our behalf. He feels yearnings over use which He restrains, and

dares not betray till the work of conviction is complete.

He spake roughly to awaken conscience. — It had slept for twenty years. They had almost forgotten that scene at the pit's mouth; but as he repeated their tones, and words, and treatment, it all came back again, and they cried, "We are verily guilty concerning our brother." There must be repentance and confession before God can take us to His heart. We must confess the wrongs done to our Brother in heaven and our brothers on earth; and many of the roughness of God's Providence are intended to awaken us, and bring our sin to remembrance.

He spake roughly to test them. — How did they feel toward each other: was there rivalry, or bitterness, or angry feeling? Beneath his biting words, Joseph would mark their behavior! Would they disown each other, or cling to one another? There was an opportunity for their doing one or the other; and he was glad to notice how their love approved itself. So we are led over stony roads, that God may know what is in our hearts. He gives us opportunities of showing our real feeling towards our brothers, that He may test our love towards Himself.

September

September 12

Genesis 43:21

“And it came to pass, when we came to the inn, that we opened our sacks, and, behold, every man’s money was in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight: and we have brought it again in our hand.”

JOSEPH, who gave corn to save his own brethren and the Gentiles from starvation, is a type of Him who gives the bread of life to Jew and Greek — to all that hunger and come to Him for supplies. And in this return of the full money in the sack’s mouth, we are reminded that salvation and satisfaction are all of grace.

They are without money and without price. Whatever we yield to Him, He returns in full weight.

We bring Him works of merit as a price of our pardon; but they are not noticed.

We bring Him emotion, tears, anguish of soul; but He will have none of them.

We bring Him our faith as a price, instead of as a hand that accepts; and He refuses it.

How many are our mistakes and misunderstandings! Yet He does

not for that reason withhold His blessed gift. We get the corn as an act of His free grace; and afterwards He explains why it was that our careful dues were not accepted.

There is bread enough in God to supply every mouth of desire and hunger in your soul. You may have it for the seeking. The law is — ask, and have. What if you have no money with which to purchase, no earnestness, no merit? Nevertheless the best wheat of heaven may be yours. Our Father's love is constantly devising means of expressing itself. It puts money into our sacks; it invites us to its home, and spreads banquets before us; it inclines stewards to meet us peacefully; it washes our feet; it takes a tender interest in those we love; it wishes us grace from God; it adjusts itself to our temperaments and puts us at our ease, go to that gleam of light as to the love of Jesus strike into our hearts!

September 13

Genesis 44:28

“And the one went out from me, and I said, Surely he is torn in pieces; and I saw him not since:”

THESE are words caught from his father's mouth by Judah; and here repeated, in his most pathetic intercession, with the hope of softening the Governor's heart, and moving him to spare Benjamin at least. They are very sad, and, without doubt, justified by the vision of that blood-stained coat. Yet there was another interpretation to the sad and dark suggestion which it made: Joseph was alive, and they were soon to know that it was he with whom they were dealing, and that he was conducting them through these strange experiences.

We are often tempted to judge hastily, and by appearances; by

our own despondent, sorrowful hearts; or by the reports of others.

We may say that certain things are against us, when, if we would only look beyond appearances and circumstances to God, we should find that He had been working, and was working, mightily on our behalf — that all was for our lasting good.

Do not say that you have lost your Joseph; he lives, and will yet be a comfort to you. He was taken from you for a little, to bring blessing to your whole family, but to be given back to you, more yours than ever.

Do not look on the sad, but on the bright side of God's Providence. All things are working for the best. "In all these things is the life of the spirit." Do not judge Him, or try to understand; be still and trust. You will some day be ashamed of your little faith.

Blind unbelief is sure to err,

And scan his work in vain,

God is His own interpreter,

And He will make it plain.

September 14

Genesis 45:5

"Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life."

THERE was great delicacy in Joseph's command, "Cause every

man to go out from me.” He did not want to expose his brethren; yet he wanted to say words which could not be understood by the curious courtiers. Then he made himself known, and said, “Be not grieved, nor angry, for God did send me before you.” This was not only a kind way of alleviating their remorse and sorrow, but was the standpoint from which Joseph was wont to review his life-course. It was his habit to trace the working-out of God’s plan, and the interposition of his Providence amid and through the malevolence and treachery of men (Genesis 50:20).

This was also David’s habit, who, in the cursing of Shimei and the revolt of Absalom, saw the evolution of God’s permissive purposes.

Thus also Jesus spoke, when anticipating the coming of Judas to betray Him. “The Son of Man goeth, as it was written of Him.”

“The cup that my Father giveth Me to drink.”

It is one of the inexplicable mysteries of Providence that bad men subserve God’s purposes and unwittingly execute His plans.

It is not for us to explain it, but to consider the perplexities and disaster which we suffer at the hands of evil men as being permitted by God for the furtherance of some Divine and hidden purpose.

Paul’s prayer that he might preach the Gospel at Rome was fulfilled through the hatred of the Jews; and he went to Rome at the Emperor’s expense. We may comfort ourselves whenever the storm is high, that God, is at the helm, and is making the wrath of man praise Him, whilst the remainder of it shall be restrained. Yes, Joseph, God is sending you through that pit and prison: but there is a way out into sunlight.

September 15

Genesis 46:3

“And he said, I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation:”

PROBABLY the old man, remembering the experiences of Abraham, was very fearful to adventure himself into Egypt.

Besides, was it not as though, in going thither, he renounced the Land of Promise? Therefore this special bidding and assurance were the more necessary.

When our heart misgives us, let us look out for one of God’s fear-nots. — His eye is ever upon the righteous, and his ear open to their cry. One upward glance or tremulous prayer will make Him ride on a cherub to our side, and whisper, “Be not afraid; fear not, I am with thee.”

God’s promises are fulfilled in most unexpected ways. — He had always foretold that the seed of Abraham should outnumber stars and sands; but who would have supposed that the promise would be realized amid the pressure and persecution of Egypt? Yet so it happened. “I will there make of thee a great nation.” We must not judge after the sight of our eyes, nor act on what is known as our common sense; faith is led by very uncommon paths. Trust and obey!

God’s presence in Egypt acted as an antidote to its evil, and delivered from its tyrant’s grasp. — Ah, my soul, thou mightest descend without fear into hell itself if God said, “I will go down with thee, and will surely bring thee up again.” The Divine Presence is strength to the fearful — security and consolation in life, peace in death. It was probably thus that the Father spake to the Son by the lips of the Angel in Gethsemane: “Fear not to go

down into the grave: I will surely bring thee up again.” Thus He speaks to us. He is with us, and will deliver.

September 16

Genesis 47:25

“And they said, Thou hast saved our lives: let us find grace in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh’s servants.”

NOTHING less would have extorted such an acknowledgment from those proud Egyptians. They were willing to serve their savior. No doubt, had there been no provision made by Joseph, the streets would have been filled by emaciated skeletons picking their way feebly amid the heaps of the dying and the dead. Gratitude brought them into the dust before him who held the keys of the granaries.

The kingdom of Christ is a matter of supreme importance to individuals and the world. — He is not ambitious of power for its own sake; but that He may be able to exercise it more fully for our benefit, and that He may finally render up the kingdom to God, even his Father, that God may be all in all. He will never, therefore, be perfectly satisfied till He has triumphantly entered all closed gates, as King.

His kingdom is given Him by the glad choice of those whom He had blessed and saved. — The song of heaven reflects this thought: “Thou art worthy. . for thou wast slain.” His empire depends on the sacrifice by which He has saved a multitude whom no man can number. Meditate much on the love of Calvary, and you too will feel that His empire should begin within your heart, and hasten to subdue the kingdoms of the world.

When He becomes king, He still further blesses us. — The first

hour of Joseph's supreme power was the beginning of Egypt's brightest days. The Egyptians could not do so well for themselves as he for them. We shall never know the real blessedness of living, its peace and joy and strength, till we have utterly surrendered to Christ's supremacy. To serve such a Master utterly is to drink of the river of perfect blessedness.

September 17

Genesis 48:2

“And one told Jacob, and said, Behold, thy son Joseph cometh unto thee: and Israel strengthened himself, and sat upon the bed.”

HOW needful Joseph was to Jacob! The aged patriarch could not die without seeing him. His presence lit the dark valley.

His hands closed the tired eyes of the aged pilgrim. And Joseph was as quick to come at the first intimation of his father's desire to see him. There was a perfect sympathy and reciprocity between them, just as there may be between Christ and those who owe all to Him.

Jesus is ever leading us on to new and deeper experiences. — In no true life is stagnation admissible. So the nest is constantly being stirred up, and the trumpets sounded for the striking of our tents.

But there is a Divine motive in it all. Jesus cannot rest satisfied with less than the best for those He loves, as Joseph could not permit Jacob to remain in Canaan whilst Goshen with its plenty awaited him.

In all the new experiences Jesus meets us. — When his father

entered Egypt, Joseph was waiting for him. When he was summoned to stand before Pharaoh, Joseph brought him. When he lay a-dying, Joseph was at his side to receive his last commissions.

So, trembling soul, if Jesus presses you into the unknown, He does not leave you there, but keeps coming again, meeting you at every point of anxiety and distress. Yea, He does what Joseph could not do. He stands, not on this side only, but on the other side, of death.

Here to calm with his benediction; there to receive into his glory.

Jesus is careful for body as well as soul. — The dying man was anxious about the disposal of his body, and Joseph readily undertook to see it buried in Machpelah's cave. So Jesus cares for us. He is the Savior of the body in this life and in the

September 18

Genesis 49:10

“The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.”

OLD experience is said to attain to something of prophetic strain; but there is more than old experience here. From these aged lips the Holy Ghost is speaking.

The mission and work of Jesus are designated. — He is Shiloh — the Maker, Giver, and Bringer of Peace. The troubled conscience, smitten with conviction, finds peace when He reveals His all-sufficient sacrifice and atonement. The discordant elements

within us settle into a great calm when He enters to reign, bringing every thought into captivity to His rule. Nor is His work for individuals only; it is for man, for the world, the universe. Peace was made at His cross; it is proclaimed by His Spirit; and it will be consummated when God is All in all.

The time of His advent predicted. — Not till the Romans came and annexed Palestine as one of the provinces of the empire, did the semblance of the Hebrew monarchy expire. And it was then that the Shiloh came. Surely these words must often have been quoted by the pious Jews, with whom Simeon and Anna consorted, as pointing to the near advent of the Messiah. Let us be wise to discern the symptoms of His second advent.

The inevitableness of his dominion. — Ah, Savior, it is predicted that all peoples shall obey Thee; and we know well that it is only through obedience that men can enter into Thy peace. Teach us to obey, to do all thy commands, to bear all thy burdens, to wait before Thee. That thus we may know the peace that passeth all understanding.

Ponder this well, O my soul; the Peace-giver must be obeyed.

Only so can He give thee peace that floweth as a river.

September

September 19

Genesis 50:20

“But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.”

GOD’S deeper meanings! We are apt to see a malicious meaning; are we equally apt to detect the Divine and benevolent one? Our enemies are many, and they hate us with perfect hatred; they are ever laying their plots, and working their unholy purposes. But there is a greater and wiser than they, who, through all these plottings, is prosecuting His Divine purpose.

There is another and deeper meaning than appears to the short sight of sense.

Let us believe that there is a Divine and deeper meaning in the adversities of our lives. — Joseph might be forgiven for not doing so; but with his history and that of many others before us, we have no excuse for despair in the face of crushing sorrow. Whether it comes from man or devil, all creatures are under the Divine control, holding to our lips cups which the Father’s hand has mixed. He has no complicity with their evil, but they unconsciously perform His will. Even if you cannot see the Divine meaning, dare to believe that it is there.

Await the disclosures of time. — Even here we sometimes reach an eminence from which we detect the meaning of the path by which we have been conducted. It may have been rough and

circuitous, but there was a reason in it all. Often God rewards patient trust by allowing us to see and know.

And for the full revelation of eternity. — One day God will call us to His side in the clear light of eternity, and will explain His meanings in life's most sorrowful experiences; and we shall learn that we suffered, not for ourselves only, but for others, and, as part of His great remedial scheme, "to save much people alive."

September 20

Exodus 1:12

"But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were grieved because of the children of Israel."

IT was a very unequal struggle on which Pharaoh had entered; for he opposed not the Hebrews, but Jehovah. It is thus that the great ones of this world have ever spoken and acted. "Let us build us a city and a tower;" "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us." "Against thy holy child Jesus, . . both Herod and Pontius Pilate ... were gathered together." In every case, He that sits in the heavens has laughed at the boast of human pride.

His cause and His people's are one. Yet times of affliction have always been on times of multiplication.

In the history of the Church. — When has she made her greatest number of adherents? When her pulpits have been filled with eloquent preachers, and her aisles crowded with fashion and wealth?

No; but when she has been driven to the dens and caves of the

earth, and her sons have been proscribed outcasts. The real triumphs of the early Church were in the first centuries of opprobrium and persecution; her decline began when Constantine made Christianity the religion of the State.

In the history of each earnest soul. — It is rarely the case that we make much spiritual headway when winds and currents favor us.

We do best when all is against us. We grow quickest in the dark. In times of persecution we realize the security, and comfort, and joy, which are in Christ Jesus our Lord; and as God goes the round of the world, it is in chambers of pain, sickness, and bereavement; that He beholds the multiplication of the choice graces of holy character and temper. The affliction, which is for the moment, is working out an exceeding weight of glory.

September 21

Exodus 2:12

“And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand.”

THIS was creature-strength, wrought on by creature-passion, and ending in creature-failure. Moses stood on an eminence, and reached down to these poor brethren of his with a passing spasm of pity. He was very careful to look this way and that, go as not to invalidate his own position at court. And fear for himself carried him swiftly from the scene of his people's woes. It was a brief effort to do the Divine work of redemption in his own energy.

Long years must pass, during which God would drain away drop by drop his strength, his resolution, and his very desire to be an

emancipator; that when he had become nothing, God through him might effect His almighty will.

We sometimes smite the Egyptian within. — We rise up against some tyrant passion, and strike two or three vigorous blows. Our efforts to rid ourselves of its thrall originate and are prosecuted in our own resolve. At first the conflict seems easily our own; finally the dead weight of all the Egyptians within is more than a match for us.

We often smite the Egyptian without. — We make an assault on some giant evil — drink, gambling, impurity. It seems at first as though we should carry the position by our sudden and impetuous rush. But Egypt conquers in the end, and we flee.

No: we need to learn for the inward and outward conflict the lesson that forty years in Midian taught Moses, that only the Spirit of God in man can overcome the spirit of the world. By disappointment and repeated failure, by the silence of the desert, we are taught that we are nothing — then God becomes our all in all: and all things become possible to us as we believe.

September 22

Exodus 3:13

“And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?”

THIS is a marvelous chapter, because it is so full of God. If the previous one, in its story of human striving, reminds us of Romans 7, this as surely recalls Romans 8. There is little mention of the part that Moses was to play, but much is said of what God

was about to do. “I am come down.” “I will bring you up.” “I will stretch out my hand.” O weary soul, bitter with weary bondage, groaning beneath cruel taskmasters, afflicted and tossed with tempest, the I AM has come down!

God comes down to our lowest to lift us to His highest. — This is the theme of the magnificent, and of Hannah’s song. God comes down to the dust for the poor, and to the dunghill for the needy. You cannot be too lonely or broken in spirit for Him to notice and help.

In proportion to your humiliation will be your exaltation.

He comes down to our saddest to lift us to His joy fullest. — How great the contrast between the cry of the Hebrews, because of their taskmasters, and the exultant note that smote on the rocks of the Red Sea! Such shall be your experience also. If you suffer in the line of God’s will and providence, you are sowing the seeds of light and gladness. Oh, anticipate the harvest!

He comes down to our helplessness to succor with His great might. — Israel could not help herself; but the resources of I AM were sufficient for every need, and they will be for yours and mine.

This is God’s blank check; fill it in! Insert after these majestic words, wisdom, or courage, or love, or whatever you need most.

And He will be all this, and more also not for a moment, but always; not spasmodically, but unchangeably.

September 23

Exodus 4:10

“And Moses said unto the LORD, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue.”

THIS is what we all say. We think more of the words than of the message; more of our eloquence or slowness of speech than of the King's seal and signature. Moses had learned many wholesome lessons through his long sojourn in Midian; but he had to learn this last one, that God does not want excellency of speech or of language in His messengers, but the unction and power which come on those who speak after direct audience with the Eternal. Aaron, who came to meet Moses, could speak well; but he was a weak man, whose alliance with Moses caused his nobler younger brother much anxiety and pain. However, God determined to send Aaron with him, to be his colleague and spokesman. Better a thousand times had it been for Moses to trust God for speech, than be thus deposed of his premiership.

Be sure to get thy message from the King. — Wait before Him in the inner shrine, till He says the word which thou shalt speak. This will give thee the real eloquence of the heart.

Look up for the right words. — The Apostle said that the Corinthians were enriched in all utterance; and he said that he spoke the Divine mysteries in words which the Holy Spirit taught. Ask for these, and you will not be disappointed.

Rely on the Divine co-operation. — There is another force at work, more subtle and penetrating than the most eloquent words of man — the power of the Holy Ghost. Seek for His Divine demonstration and co-witness. And it shall come to pass, that mysterious influences shall move over the hearts of those that listen to thy words, which shall attest the mighty fellowship and co-operation of One whom the natural man cannot detect.

September 24

Exodus 5:22

“And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Lord, wherefore hast thou so evil entreated this people? why is it that thou hast sent me?”

BEFORE God can use us, He must bring us to an end ourselves. When Paul was summoned to the greatest epistles and labors of his life, his strength was drained to utter weakness, and he despaired even of life. So in the case of Moses and Israel.

Moses, for forty years, had been undergoing the emptying process; but perhaps when God called him to this great enterprise, there may have been a slight revival of confidence in himself, in his mission, his miracles, the eloquence of Aaron's speech. So in the rebuff he received from Pharaoh, in the bitter remonstrance of the elders of his people, in the sad consciousness that his efforts had aggravated their condition, the lesson was still further taught him — that of himself he could do absolutely nothing.

Israel also had begun to hope something from his mission.

Through the brickfields the story ran of his early years, his uncompromising speech to Pharaoh, of his miracles; and the wretched slaves cherished faith in him and Aaron as their heavensent deliverers. They had, however, to learn that all such hopes were vain, and to see that the brothers, at the best, were as weak as themselves. Then the way was prepared to lean only on God.

Ourselves. — By repeated failures all along our life-course God is teaching us the same lesson. We fail to justify and then to sanctify ourselves. Our efforts to serve and please Him only end in increasing perplexity. The tale of bricks is doubled; the

burdens augment; the strength of our purpose is broken; we are utterly discouraged; and then, when the soul is utterly desolate, the heavenly Bridegroom draws near and says, “I will do all; I am Alpha and Omega; I am thy salvation.”

September 25

Exodus 6:6

“Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments:”

WHEN all human help has failed, and the soul, exhausted and despairing, has given up hope from man, God draws near, and says, I AM. It is as though He said, “All that can really help you resides in my nature as in its native home. I have weaned you from all beside, that you might seek in Me what you had been wont to seek in men and things and self-help.”

Thus God with Israel. The people had come to relish the dainties of Egypt — the leeks and onions, the fleshpots and sensual delights; therefore the need for this cruel bondage to wean them, and prepare them for marriage union with Himself. Moreover, they placed great hopes in Moses, and such appeals as might be made to move Pharaoh’s pity; from these too it was necessary to withdraw the people’s heart, that they might look for all to their heavenly Lover, and find in Jehovah their infinite supply.

Affliction is always needful in the first stage of the Christian’s deepening experience. The world, with its vainglory, pride, and envy; the delights of the flesh; the praise and good opinion of our fellows — these take the place of Christ in his disciples. We must be taught to despise these things, and feel their vanity and

insufficiency to satisfy.

Failure is often necessary to teach humility and patience; so that we may have no confidence in anything we can call our own, and be prepared to find all our satisfaction and delight in Jesus only.

Revelation then becomes possible, of all that God can be and do. He draws near with His sevenfold “I will.” He looks on us with infinite delight, and commences to bring us into such blessedness that we forget all else, and behold our Bridegroom only.

September 26

Exodus 7:5

“And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch forth mine hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them.”

IN God’s dealings with His people He purposed to reveal Himself to Egypt: so that when He led forth Israel’s hosts, in redemption power, from the brickfields of slavery on to resurrection ground, there might be afforded such a display of His love, and pity, and power, as the world had never before witnessed. Egypt and all surrounding nations should know the character of God in the Exodus, as the Lover and Redeemer of His own.

So with the Church. — The Apostle tells us that redeemed men are to be the subjects of angelic contemplation and wonder. In the Church, principalities and powers shall discern the manifold wisdom and grace of God. When God has brought all the ransomed hosts up from the Egyptian bondage of the world to stand in the radiance of the eternal morning, then the universe shall ring with the ascription, “Great and marvellous are thy

works. ... just and true are thy ways.”

So with each individual believer. — Each one of us has been formed for Jesus Himself, that we might show forth His praise. In growing purity and sweetness, in our deliverance from the clinging corruptions of the world and flesh, in our patience under tribulation, our submission and steadfast hope, in our willingness to sacrifice ourselves for others, let us be revelations of what Christ is, and of what He can make sinful men become.

Believers are the world’s Bibles, by studying which men may come to know the Lord Himself. Let us see to it that we be clear in type, unmistakable in our testimony, pleasant to behold, thoughtful and helpful towards all, commending the blessed Bridegroom whom the world sees not.

September 27

Exodus 8:23

“And I will put a division between my people and thy people: to morrow shall this sign be.”

THIS division is as old as eternity. — In the council chamber of the Godhead the Father chose Jesus and all who should believe in Him unto eternal life. We cannot understand the reason of that Divine choice; we can only affirm it, that in those ages of the unfathomed past, Christ and His seed stood out from the rest of mankind, the people of God’s own possession and inheritance.

It was effected by the Cross of Jesus. — By it we are crucified to the world, and the world to us. The cross, with its outstretched arms, stands sentinel between the Church and the world which cast out her Lord. The grave, like a great gulf, yawns between those who gather round the risen Master on resurrection ground,

and all men else. From the moment that Jesus ascended, the rallying center of the Church was removed from earth to heaven, from the cross to the throne.

It is wrought out by the daily grace of the Holy Ghost. It is right, of course, to come out and be separate in our outward walk and behavior. But, deeper than this, if only we will let the Spirit of God work unhindered, He will effect an inward division. Our tastes and desires, our hopes and aims, will become different, and we shall be aware of a growing dissimilarity between ourselves and the world.

Then to the separate soul the Bridegroom comes. He says tender and loving words. In one hour He teaches more than all human teachers could; and sheds forth by the Holy Ghost the torrent of Divine Love. There may be darkness without, but there is light in the dwellings of Goshen: there may be plague and pestilence in the world, but there is peace, joy, and bliss, in the separated soul.

September 28

Exodus 9:26

“Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, was there no hail.”

THOSE who are included in the provisions of the covenant are sealed. The storm may sweep around them, but the great angel, who ascends from the east, cries with a great voice to the angels to whom it is given to hurt the earth, and the sea, and the trees, saying, Hurt them not till we have sealed the servants of God in their foreheads (Revelation 7:3).

The only spot in which the soul is safe is within the encircling

provisions of the covenant. Israel stood there, and was safe — not only from the hail, but from the destroying sword. The invulnerable walls of that sacred enclosure were the oath and promise of God to Abraham. God had bound Himself by the most solemn sanctions to be a God to this people, and deliver them; it was necessary, therefore, that He should be their pavilion and canopy, catching the hailstones on His outstretched wings and securing them from hurt.

The covenant is entered, not by merit nor by works. There was neither the one nor the other in that race of slaves; but they stood there simply because of their relationship to the Friend of God.

So we enter the blessed safety of the better covenant, through our relationship with the Lord Jesus, who is the Beloved of the Father, the one glorious and blessed Man. Without beauty or merit, the soul attaches itself by faith to Him, and discovers that it was loved before the worlds were made.

Ah, blessed Lover of souls, we see how the storm swept thy heart, that it might never touch us. Thou art our hiding-place, our shield, our deliverer, our strong tower. Without dismay we can anticipate the storms of death, judgment, and eternity, sure that wherever Thou art there can be no hail.

September 29

Exodus 10:23

“They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days: but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.”

WITHOUT, darkness that might be felt; **within**, light. This should

be the condition of each believing heart. The sun may have gone down, and the moon withdrawn herself in the firmament of the world; the darkness of perplexity and trouble may envelop Pharaoh and all his chosen counselors; all things may wear the aspect of approaching dissolution: but with the Lord as our everlasting Light we walk in the light of life.

Light is purity. — The soul which is exposed to the indwelling of God, purifies itself even as He is pure; and walks as Jesus did, with white and stainless robes. He that says he has fellowship with the Holy God, and walks in the darkness of his own lusts, lies. Where God is really hidden in the heart, the beams of his lovely purity must irradiate and beautify the life.

Light is knowledge. — There is a wisdom, an insight, an understanding of the Divine mysteries, which the mere intellect could never give, but are the product of the Divine indwelling in the holy soul. All around men may be groping aimlessly after truth, trying to discover the secret of the Universe, whilst to the loving, childlike soul, in which God has taken up his abode, these things, which are hidden from the wise and prudent, are unveiled.

Light is love. — It steals so gently over the world, blessing flowers and birds, little children and invalids. Everywhere it is the symbol of the beneficent work of its Creator. His eldest daughter!

Thus amid the selfishness of the world, let Jesus dwell deep in thee, that thou mayest be rooted and grounded in the love of God, which shall illumine thy dwelling, and ray out to the world.

September 30

Exodus 11:2

“Speak now in the ears of the people, and let every man borrow of his neighbour, and every woman of her neighbour, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold.”

THE Egyptians knew very well that they would never see their jewels again; and the people of Israel were thus, to some extent, compensated for their unpaid toils. The Lord gave them such favor with the Egyptians that they gave them whatever they asked; so that “they spoiled the Egyptians.”

These jewels were employed afterwards in the adornment and enrichment of the Sanctuary. They flashed in the breastplate of the High Priest, and shone in the sacred vessels. In this they remind us of the treasures which David gathered by his conquests from neighboring nations, and which were afterwards incorporated in the Temple of Solomon. They recall also the glowing predictions of the prophet, that the kings of the earth shall bring their treasures into the New Jerusalem.

The jewels of the Church, whether they stand for her graces or her choice children, have often been obtained from the midst of Egypt. Was not Saul of Tarsus just such a jewel? The world counted him one of her rarest sons; but God set him as a jewel in the breastplate of Immanuel.

Let us ever seek jewels from the land of our captivity and suffering. It will not do to come away empty. It is not enough merely to bear what God permits to fall on us for our chastisement; but to go further, and extract from all trials, jewels. Let every trial and temptation enrich you with the opposite grace. There are Egyptians in your life, which have grievously tormented you with their heavy whips, yet even these shall yield wealth “jewels of silver and jewels of gold”; which you shall consecrate to holy service, and which shall shine in the fabric and worship of the New Jerusalem.

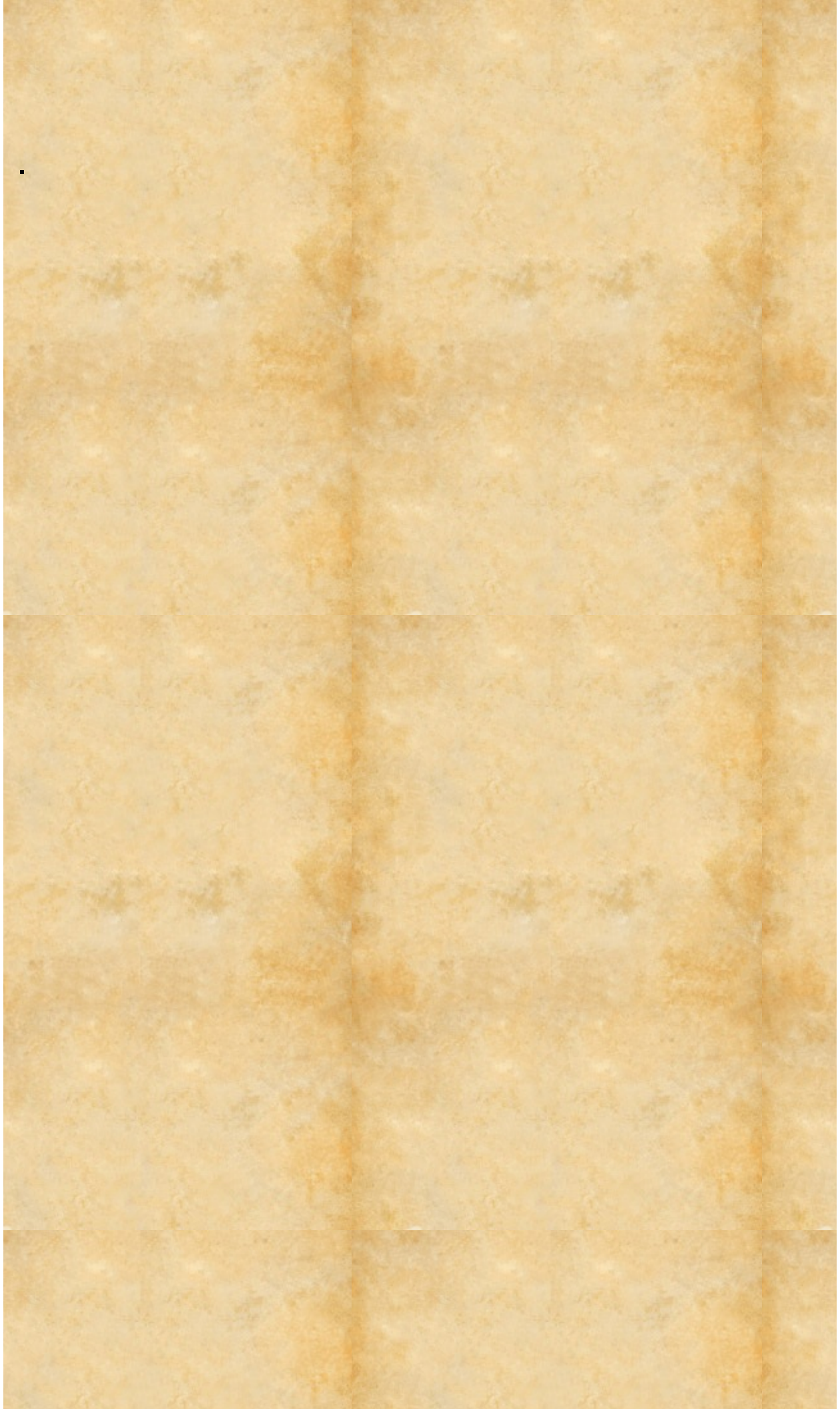


Our Daily Homily

By

F.B. Meyer

- 1. October 1st through 9th**
- 2. October 10th through 16th**
- 3. October 17th through 23rd**
- 4. October 24th through 31th**



October

October 1

Exodus 12:8

“And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it.”

THE Paschal feast is the emblem of the Christian life.

The Blood is ever speaking to God for us; though we see it not, God sees it, and hears its prevalent plea. We in the meanwhile are called upon to feed in faith daily, hourly, on the flesh of the Son of Man, according to His own command. In all Christian life, even in its hours of greatest rapture, there must be a touch of the bitter herb.

We can never forget the cost of our redemption. — Even in heaven, in the full realization of its bliss, whenever we catch sight of the print of the nails in His hand, we shall remember the agony and bloody sweat, the cross and passion, and eat the feast with the flavor of the bitter herb. How much more on earth, where we are so constantly requiring the efficacy of His precious death!

There will always be the memory of our sinner-ship. — We cannot forget our unworthiness and sin. He has forgiven; but we cannot forget. Ah, those years of rebellion and perverseness before we yielded to Him; and those years of self-will and pride since we knew His love! They will sometimes come back to us and give us to eat of the bitter herb.

Moreover, there must be the constant crucifixion of the self-life. We can only properly feed on Jesus, the Lamb of God, when we are animated by the spirit of self-surrender and humiliation, of death to the world and to the will of the flesh, which were the characteristics of His cross. Deep down in our hearts, the drinking of His cup and being baptized with His baptism, will be the touch of the bitter herbs in the feast. But “the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”

October 2

Exodus 13:14

“And it shall be when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What is this? that thou shalt say unto him, By strength of hand the LORD brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage:”

FOUR times over in this chapter Moses lays stress on the strong hand with which God redeemed his people from the bondage of Egypt; and we are reminded of “the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe” (Ephesians 1:12–20).

God’s strong hand reaches down to where we are. — It would have been useless if Israel had been bidden to help itself up to a certain point, whilst God would do the rest. The people were so broken that they could only lie at the bottom of the pit, and moan.

God’s hand reached down to touch and grasp them at their lowest.

So God’s help is not conditional on our doing something, whilst He will do the rest. When we are without strength, when we have expended our all in vain, when heart and flesh fail then God

comes where we are, and becomes the strength of our heart and our portion for ever.

God's strong hand is mightier than our mightiest adversaries. Pharaoh was strong, and held the people as a child may hold a moth in its clenched fist. But a man's hand is stronger than a child's, and God's than Pharaoh's. So Satan may have held you in bondage; but do not fear him any more, look away to the strength of God's hand.

What can it not do for you?

We must appropriate and reckon on God's strong hand. — It is there towards them who believe, as a locomotive may be next a line of carriages; yet there must be a coupling-iron connecting them. So you must trust God's strength, and avail yourself of it, and yield to it. Remember that His arm is not shortened, nor His hand paralyzed, except our unbelief and sin intercept and hinder the mighty working of His Power.

October 3

Exodus 14:30

“Thus the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians; and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore.”

WHAT a relief that morning brought from the anxieties of the previous night! Then, as they lifted up their eyes, they saw Pharaoh and the dreaded Egyptian taskmaster in full pursuit; now they beheld the sea-shore strewn with their bodies, stark and cold.

They would never see them again, nor hear the crack of their

whips.

So in life we are permitted to see the dreaded temptations and evils of earlier days suddenly deprived of all power to hurt us. The Egyptians are dead upon the shore; and we see the great work of the Lord. Let us take comfort in this— In the pressure of trial. — You are suffering keenly; yet remember that no trial is allowed to come from any source in which there is not a Divine meaning. Nothing can enter your life, of which God is not cognizant, and which He does not permit. Though the pressure of your trial is almost unbearable, you will one day see your Egyptians dead.

Amid the temptations of the great adversary of souls. — They may seem at this moment more than you can bear; but God is about to deliver you. He can so absolutely free you from the habits of self-indulgence which you have contracted, and from the perpetual yielding to temptation to which you have been prone, that some day you will look with amazement and thankfulness on these things, as Egyptians dead on the sea-shore.

So also in the presence of death. — Many believers dread, not the after-death, but the act of dying. But as the morning of eternity breaks, they will awake with songs of joy to see death and the grave and all the evils that they dreaded, like Egyptians, strewn on the shores of the sea of glass.

October 4

Exodus 15:25

“And he cried unto the LORD; and the LORD shewed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and

there he proved them,”

OUR joys and sorrows, like the varied products of nature, lie very close together. One moment we are singing the joyous song of victory on the shores of the Red Sea, and vow we will never again mistrust our God; and then, by a sudden transition, we find ourselves standing beside the Marsh waters of pain and disappointment, inclined to murmur at our lot.

There is, however, a tree, which, when cast into the waters, makes them sweet. It is the tree of the cross. “Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree.” The cross means the yielding up of the will. Now, it is in proportion as we see God’s will in the various events of life, and surrender ourselves either to bear or do it, that we shall find earth’s bitter things becoming sweet, and its hard things easy.

We must yield our will to God. — The secret of blessedness is in saying “Yes” to the will of God, as it is shown in the circumstances of our lot or the revelations of His Word. It is the will of a Father whose love and wisdom are beyond question.

We must accept what He permits. — It may be that our pains emanate from the malevolence or negligence of others; still, if He has permitted them, they are His will for us. By the time they reach us they have become minted with His die, and we must patiently submit.

We must do all He bids. — The thread of obedience must always be running through our hands. At all costs to our choice and feeling we must not only have His commands, but keep them. Our Lord perpetually lays stress on obeying His words. This is the spirit of the Cross, and the properties of this tree sweeten earth’s bitterest sorrows.

“Disappointments become His appointments.”

October 5

Exodus 16:4

“Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no.”

IT is said that the twenty-four hours should be divided thus: Eight hours for work, eight for rest, eight for recreation, food, etc.

There should be a counterpart of this in Christian living. Each day there should be a portion for work, a portion for restful meditation and sitting before the Lord, and a portion for the gathering of God's manna.

Each day brings its own work. — God has created us for good works, and has prepared our pathway, so that we may come to them one by one. He has apportioned to each one some office to fulfill, some service to render, some function in the mystical body of our Lord. It is comforting to know that we have not to scheme for ourselves, but to look up for guidance into the Divine plan.

Each day brings its own difficulties. — God spreads them over our days, giving each day only what we can sustain. The servant girl might be startled were she told that she would have to carry the coals, which it has taken two horses and a great cart to brim to her master's door; but she will be comforted by being reminded that they will be borne upstairs only a coal — scuttle full at a time.

Each day brings its own supply. — No Israelite could point to his store of manna and congratulate himself that he was proof against any famine that might befall. The lesson of daily trust for

daily bread was constantly being enforced; for as the day came the manna fell. Those who followed the cloud were always certain of their sustenance. Where the cloud brooded the manna fell. Whatever any day may bring there always will be within reach of you, lying ready prepared on the sands of the desert, just what you require. Go forth and carry it; there will be no lack.

October 6

Exodus 17:6

“Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.”

HERE is a beautiful example of the co-operation between God and His servants in providing for the needs of His people.

Clearly the smiting of the rock was a very small item in this incident, the main consideration was what God was doing in the heart of the earth. But the two wrought together: Moses in the eyes of the people, God in hidden depths. Similarly we are fellow-workers with God.

One of the greatest revelations that can come to any Christian worker is the realization that in every act of Christian ministry there are two agents, God and man: that God does not need to be implored to help us, but wants us to help Him; that our part is the very unimportant and subsidiary one of smiting the rock, whilst His is the Divine and all important part of making the waters flow.

Did Moses go to the rock that day weighted with care, his brow furrowed with the anxiety of furnishing a river of which his people might drink? Certainly not; he had only to smite: God

would do all the rest, and had pledged Himself to it. So, Christian worker, you have been worrying as though the whole weight of God's inheritance were upon you, but you are greatly mistaken; smiting is very easy work.

In every congregation and religious gathering the Holy Spirit is present, eager to glorify Christ, and to pour out rivers of living water for thirsty men; believe this. See that you are spiritually in a right condition, that He may be able to ally you with Himself. Keep reckoning on Him to do His share; and when the river is flowing, be sure not to take the praise.

October 7

Exodus 18:23

“If thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee so, then thou shalt be able to endure, and all this people shall also go to their place in peace.”

IT was good and sound advice that Jethro gave his son-in-law. It could hardly have been better. It is always better to set one hundred men to work than attempt to do the work of one hundred men. There is no greater art in the world than to develop the latent capacities of those around us by yoking them to useful service. But good though the advice obviously was, Jethro carefully guarded Moses against adopting it, unless the Lord had been consulted, and had commanded it.

Let us test human advice. — There are plenty of voices that advise us, and each has some nostrum for our health, some direction for our path. Some are true guides, whom God has sent to us, as Jethro to Moses. Often an onlooker can see mistakes we are making, and can suggest something better. But we are wise to get alone into the holy presence of God, and ask what He

commands, what is His will.

Let us test human teachings — So full is the world of voices, so bewildering the din of religious schools and sects! The Apostle was justified in advising us to prove all things, and to try the spirits, whether they were of God. There are four tests for truth what glorifies Christ; what humbles the flesh; what is in accord with the Word of God; and what has stood the trial of Christian experience in the past.

There is no teacher like God, and we may always detect His voice. It is small and still; it casts down imagination, and brings our thoughts into the captivity of Jesus; it is definite and distinct. When there is an indistinct murmur of many sounds along the wire, you may be sure that you are not in communication with your Father's person. When He speaks, there is no mistaking His voice or His will.

October 8

Exodus 19:5

“Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine:”

OUR Savior told of a man who, in plowing his field, heard his plough-share chink against buried treasure, and hastened to sell all that he had in order to buy it. In speaking thus, He pictured Himself as well as us. He found us before we found Him. The treasure is His people, in purchase whom He gave up all that He had, even to his throne (Matthew 13:44). “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:” (1 Peter 2:9).

Where his treasure is, there is a man's heart. If it is in ships on the treacherous sea, he tosses restlessly on his bed, solicitous for its safety. If it is in fabrics, he guards against moth; if in metal, against rust and thieves. And is Christ less careful for His own? Does He not guard with equal care against all that would deteriorate our value in His esteem? Need we fear the thief? Will not the Only-begotten keep us, so that the evil one shall not touch us (Matthew 6:19–20)?

God's treasure is His for ever. "And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels;" He will hold his own, as men cling to their treasure, binding it about their loins, in a storm at sea (Malachi 3:17).

Let us mind the conditions: to obey His voice, and keep His covenant; then on eagles' wings He will bring us to Himself.

Compliance with these is blessed in its results. God regards us with the ecstasy of a love that rejoices over us with singing; and counts on us as a mother on her child, a miser on his gold.

October 9

Exodus 20:21

"And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was."

GOD is light, and dwells in light, but it is mercifully veiled to the weak eye of man. This is why Christ spake in parables — that seeing, they might not see. As Moses veiled his face when he spake to the people, so God veils Himself in the flesh of Jesus, in which He tabernacles; and in the mysteries of His providence, beneath which He conceals a smiling face. The Sun of

Righteousness in whose beams we rejoice must needs hide beneath the cloud, else we should fall at His feet as dead. It may be that His light seems to us darkness, because of its excessive brilliance; but God dwells in the thick darkness — clouds and darkness are round about Him.

The darkness of mystery. — God has still His hidden secrets, hidden from the wise and prudent. Do not fear them; be content to accept things you cannot understand; wait patiently. Presently He will reveal to you the treasures of darkness, the riches of the glory of the mystery. Mystery is only the veil on God's face.

The darkness of trial. — Do not be afraid to enter the cloud that is settling down on your life. God is in it. The other side is radiant with His glory. "Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings."

The darkness of desertion. — When you seem loneliest and most forsaken, God is nighest. Jesus once cried "Forsaken," and immediately after, "Father." God is in the dark cloud. Plunge into the blackness of its darkness without flinching — under the shrouding curtain of His pavilion you will find God awaiting you.

October

October 10

Exodus 21:6

“Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him for ever.”

THE Hebrew slave who meant perpetual consecration of service had to lose a little blood. It was a disagreeable and not wholly painless process, by which his vows were ratified and rendered permanent. But not otherwise could he serve for ever. That awl represents the nail that affixed Christ to the cross, and we must expect it in every true act of consecration. For want of it so many seem to go through that supreme act, and shortly after go back from it, bringing discredit and shame upon the teaching they had eagerly welcomed. There are two stages in the Christian life: that in which we serve with the spirit of a slave, and that in which we freely yield ourselves to serve our Master for ever. This is the service represented by the pierced ear.

The awl spiritually means the humiliation and pain with which we surrender the self-life. We are tempted to consecrate ourselves in our own energy; to resolve on the devout life in the strength of our own resolution; to say, “I will serve Christ utterly.” We avoid the awl which deprives us of our own energy, which is applied to us by the hand of another, and which makes us helpless and self-emptied, that God may become all in all. In your case the awl may be the daily fret of some uncongenial associate; the pressure of loss and anxiety for the sake of Jesus; the humiliation of your

pride by perpetual sense of failure. Whatever it be, welcome all that binds you to His cross, because through death you live.

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”

October 11

Exodus 22:5

“If a man shall cause a field or vineyard to be eaten, and shall put in his beast, and shall feed in another man’s field; of the best of his own field, and of the best of his own vineyard, shall he make restitution.”

THIS chapter is full of restitution, of which there is far too little in ordinary Christian life. We try to make amends for injury done to another by an extraordinary amount of civility; but we are reluctant in so many words to frankly confess that we have done wrong, and make proper reparation for the act or speech. We often excuse ourselves by the thought that we were fully justified in speaking or acting as we did, whereas we may behave ourselves wrongly in courses of conduct which are themselves legitimate.

Loosing a beast into another man’s field (Exodus 22:5). — We may through our carelessness allow another to suffer detriment. The beast ought not to have been thus allowed to stray; and, as we let it loose, we should make amends for our carelessness in respect to our brother’s interests. We wrong another not only by what we do, or permit to be done, but in what we carelessly fail to do.

Kindling a Fire (Exodus 22:6). — The tongue is a spark that

kindles a great matter. If we drop firebrands and lighted matches in the inflammable material of a circle of gossip, we should make amends to the person whose character may have been thereby injured.

Borrowed goods (Exodus 22:14). — To return a house, a book, a horse, in the state in which we received it, fair wear and tear excepted, or to make good any injury, should be a commonplace of Christian morality. Trustees are responsible for not making due inquiry into risky investments. Each is his brother's keeper. If we remember at the prayer-hour that he has aught against us, let us seek him, and confess, and restore.

October 12

Exodus 23:22

“But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries.”

IT is a most helpful thought that the angel of the covenant whom is God's name, always precedes us. In our march through the wilderness we perceive His form, which is viewless to others, and realize that His strong hand prepares our path. Let us be very careful not to grieve or disobey Him, lest we lose His mighty championship. Strict obedience to His slightest whisper secures the certainty of His vindication of us from the wrongs we suffer at the hands of our foes. A little further on the same voice promises to send a hornet before the chosen host (Exodus 23:28). He who is an angel to the saint is a hornet to his foes. A swarm of bonnets is the most relentless and irresistible foe that man can face.

Have you enemies? Be sure that they hate you only for the

truth's sake, and because darkness must always be in antagonism to light.

“Who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good? But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled.” But see to it that you cherish no spirit of hatred or retaliation towards them.

Think of the misery of their heart, which is full of jealousy, envy, and bitterness. Pity and pray for them.

When we are right with God we shall have many new enemies.

All who hate Him will hate us. But this is rather to our credit than otherwise. Those who have defamed the master of the household will be hostile to his servants. But when our cause is one with God's, and His foes ours, our foes are His, and He deals with them; He stands between us and their hate. He will not leave us in their hands; He will give us vindication and deliverance.

October 13

Exodus 24:11

“And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: also they saw God, and did eat and drink.”

IT is a beautiful combination, which we should do well to emulate.

Some eat and drink, and do not behold God. — They are taken up with the delights of sense. Their one cry, as the children of this world, is, What shall we eat, what shall we drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed? But the God in whose hand their breath is and whose are all their ways, they do not glorify. Let us beware;

it was of Christian professors that the Apostle said, Their god is their belly.

Some behold God, and do not eat and drink. — They look on God with such awful fear that they isolate Him from the common duties of life. They draw a strict line between the sacred and secular, between Sunday and weekday, between God's and their own. This divorce between religion and daily life is fatal to true religion, which was meant to be the bond between the commonest details of life and the service of God.

Some behold God, and eat and drink. — They turn from the commonest avocations to look up into His face. They glorify God in their body as well as in their spirit. They obey the apostle's injunction, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." Oh for the grace to be able to combine the vision of God with every common incident — to live always beneath His eye in the unrestrained gladness of little children in their Father's presence!

Never a trial that He to not there, Never a burden that He doth not bear; Never a sorrow that He doth not share— Moment by moment I'm under his care.

October 14

Exodus 25:9

"According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it."

IT was clear that God would only be responsible for the material that was needed for His plan. If Moses, or the people, insisted on putting in more than was in His original plan, they would have to

bear the anxiety of securing the stuff. This is our mistake. We incur responsibilities that God does not put on us; we burden our hearts with anxiety and care because we insist on introducing so many items into our daily life, which would not have been there if we had but been content with God's pattern, and acquiesced in His program.

This injunction is repeated in four different passages, showing the importance with which God regards it. Indeed, to be on God's plan is the only place of rightness, safety, and joy.

God's plan in our character. — It is presented in the human life of Jesus. We are to walk as He walked. Having been called according to His purpose, let us never rest content with anything less than being conformed to the image of God's Son.

God's plan in our Christian service. — Not seeking to resemble some other devoted life; but endeavoring to be as God would have us, the embodiment of His thought, the expression of His conception. Then our efforts will be crowned with success, and we shall bear much fruit to the glory of God.

God's plan for every day. — He has prepared a scheme for the employment of every hour, and will show it to us by the indication of His Spirit, or by the trend of circumstances. Let us abide in Him, doing nothing that He does not teach, doing all He does. So life will become a tabernacle, in which the Shechinah will shine and sacrifices be offered.

October 15

Exodus 26:33

“And thou shalt hang up the vail under the taches, that thou mayest bring in thither within the vail the ark of the testimony:

and the vail shall divide unto you between the holy place and the most holy.”

THAT vail was rent when Jesus died, the Holy Ghost signifying that from that moment access was free into the Holiest. All believers are now welcome to draw near and live in the perpetual presence of God, their Father, even as Jesus did in His earthly life, and as He does in the Heaven of Heavens. This is the clear teaching of Hebrews 10:19–22:— “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.”

But there is a deeper significance still. The new and living way was opened through the rending of the flesh of Jesus Christ. As His flesh was rent on the Cross, the Temple vail was rent from the top to the bottom. And it is only when we have chosen the cross, with its shame and death, as the lot of our self-life, that we can enter into that immediate fellowship with God, which is described as “within the vail.”

How many there are who never get beyond that dividing vail!

They know the brazen altar of Atonement, the laver of daily washing, the golden altar of intercession; but they are never admitted to that blessed intimacy of communion which sees the Shechinah glory between the cherubim and blood-sprinkled mercy seat.

O Spirit of God, apply the blood to sprinkle our consciences, and the water to cleanse the habits of our daily life; and lead us where our Forerunner and Priest awaits us.

October 16

Exodus 27:20

“And thou shalt command the children of Israel, that they bring thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always.”

THE saintly McCheyne used to say, when urging his brother ministers to diligent preparation for the pulpit: “Beaten oil for the sanctuary.” And he strove never to present to his people truth which had not been beaten out by careful devout meditation.

But there is yet another thought. That lamp in the Holy Place was an emblem of the testimony of the Church, that is, of believers.

As the incense table was a type of their aspect towards God, as intercessors, so the seven-branched candlestick was a type of their aspect towards the world, as luminaries. In the Book of Revelation the Lord compares His churches to candlesticks: “the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.”

The oil is, of course, as always in Scripture, a type of the Holy Spirit. He in us is the only source of light-bearing. But the beaten oil reminds us of the chastisement and discipline through which alone our best testimony can be given. The persecutions of the Church have always been the times when she has given her fairest, brightest witness to the Redeemer. The sufferings of believers have ever led to the tenderest, strongest words for the Master, whether by the sick bed or in the hospital ward. That brokenness of spirit, which is the surest mark of the mature work of God in the heart, is also a rare condition of light-giving. The more beaten and broken you are, in poverty of spirit, the purer will be the heavenly ray of love and light which will shine forth from your life; and it is the purpose of God that you should be “blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine

as lights in the world.” (Philippians 2:15).

October

October 17

Exodus 28:34

“A golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, upon the hem of the robe round about.”

THE robe of the high priest's ephod was of blue, the color of heaven, of deep lakes, of the glacier-crevasse, of the gentian and forget-me-not. On the hem of the robe were these alternate bells and pomegranates.

Those skirts may illustrate our own position. — We dare not take a high place near the head or arm; but, thank God, there is a place for each of us at the skirt, near the foot; and the holy oil will reach us there, for the Psalmist tells us that it descended even to the skirts of the high priest's robe. It is a blessed thought, that we may receive the droppings of each anointing that falls on the head of Jesus.

But the anointing of the Holy Ghost always shows itself in sweetness and fruitfulness; the sweetness of the golden bell, tinkling with every movement, and the fruitfulness of the pomegranate.

We must be sweet, as well as fruitful. — Too many Christian workers are over-tired and over-wrought; they are peevish and, fretful. When they come back from meetings on which they have bestowed their last energies, they are neither sweet nor gentle to the home-circle, which has been so lonesome during their absence.

We must be fruitful, as well as sweet. — True religion is not a mere sentimentality; it is strong, healthy, helpful, fruit-bearing.

Some seem to think that to attend moving meetings, to be profuse in emotional tears and smiles, to make profuse use of the word dear, is to touch the high-water mark; let them learn that the worth of our life is measured by its influence on others, and its bearing fruit, which has in it the seed of reproduction. “Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.”

October 18

Exodus 29:4

“And Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shalt wash them with water.”

THIS chapter tells of the consecration to their high office of Aaron and his sons. The entire family is constantly joined thus together as one in God’s sight. Similarly, Christ and His house — which is ourselves, who believe — are one. We too must be sprinkled by the blood on ear and thumb and toe, as those who have been redeemed. We too must be consecrated and anointed; and there must be the cleanliness of which these words speak.

This is where so many have erred; they have sought consecration, anointing, and the priestly office; but have not remembered that their bodies must first be washed with pure water.

We must be clean in our habits. — If there is anything in our daily behavior which is not quite clean, it must be put away.

There seems some incongruity between the anointing of the Holy

Ghost and the smell of spirits or fumes of tobacco. Any excessive indulgence of the flesh, even in legitimate directions, and all indulgence in wrong ones, are inconsistent with the life of consecration.

We must be cleansed in our thoughts. — Whenever temptation is suggested, even though it is still in the far distance, we must turn from it with loathing, and ask that the blood of Jesus may go on cleansing hour by hour. “Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love Thee.”

We must be cleansed in our intentions. — The self-life recedes as it is driven from the outworks of our nature, and goes deeper into the motives and springs of action. We discover that self is the spring of so much of our religious activity. Everywhere we need the laver, the hourly washing of John 13.

October 19

Exodus 30:32

“Upon man’s flesh shall it not be poured, neither shall ye make any other like it, after the composition of it: it is holy, and it shall be holy unto you.”

WHAT perpetual references to the work of the Holy Spirit, under the symbol of the Anointing Oil, meet us in these chapters. It becomes us to ask ourselves very seriously whether we lay an equal stress on it in our daily experience. Is it true of us, as of those to whom the Beloved Apostle wrote, that the anointing which we received abideth in us? It is not enough to have the Spirit in us for sanctification; He must be on us for service and ministry.

But He cannot come on the flesh of the natural man; He descends only to those who are washed, consecrated, set apart for God.

Many claim the Holy Spirit's anointing, and try to reckon they have received it; but they find it fail, because they desire it for the flesh.

There must be no yielding to fleshly appetite. — When we were in the flesh, sinful passions wrought in our members. But there must be no permission given in these directions. A calm reverent, self-disciplined nature is alone fitted to be the seat of the Holy Ghost, his nest and home.

There must be no gratification to worldly pride and ambition. — Too many are eager for the Holy Ghost, that they may be able to make a name, or gather an audience; but God is not likely to give us His river of throne-water to turn the mill-wheels of personal ambition.

There must be no fleshly striving after it. — We wrestle and struggle to win the Spirit, and miss Him. It is only when our hope of attaining this blessing by our own efforts dies down, and we are humbled and broken before God; when we cry out to Him to give what we cannot win, that He draws near and gives the heat of all His donations.

October 20

Exodus 31:2

“See, I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah:”

WE lightly speak of a man's occupation as his calling, and fail to

realize the profound significance of the phrase. One man is called to the ministry; another to the bar; others, like Bezaleel and Aholiab, to work in all manner of workmanship. Each should realize, therefore, that faculty, desire, circumstance, constitute a Divine call, and that there may be as distinct a vocation in the merchant's office, the tradesman's shop, or in the work of a domestic servant, as in the Church itself.

The morning bell that summons us to daily duty is the call of our Father, bidding us to engage in the toils to which He has assigned us. He, who gave Moses the plan, gave the artificers the power to work it in gold, silver, brass, and wood. Let this be your faith; and each morning, as you go to your work, however distasteful it may be, say, "God has called me to this; and He will fill me with all the strength, wisdom, and grace, that I need for its right doing."

Abide in your calling. — Unless it is a wrong or dishonorable one, it is better to stay in it than to become restless and changeable; and if you must leave it, wait for God to open another door.

Find in God the makeweight to all the deficiencies of your life. — If you are enslaved by daily duty, remember that in Christ you are free; if free from daily toil, in Christ you are a slave. The supply of every deficiency, the rectification of every hardship, is to be found in Jesus.

Mind to do all for God. — To do all in God and for Him, remembering that He sees and accepts all, not according to the results accomplished, but to the heavenly and holy motives that prompt the worker — this is to be blessed.

October 21

Exodus 32:30

“And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the LORD; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin.”

THE heart of Moses was full of that great, wonderful new word, Atonement. For many days God had been telling him about it, and speaking it over and over to his heart. He seemed, however, to feel that no ordinary sacrifices would avail: the blood of goats and bulls would surely be insufficient to put away the black transgression into which Israel had fallen. But there was rising in his heart a resolve, to which he gave expression when he returned to God: “Blot me, I pray thee, out of the book which Thou hast written.” He did not realize that his blood would not avail, but that the blood of Christ, who should, in the fulness of times, offer Himself without spot to God, alone could put away sin.

In every heart there is a deep conviction of the necessity of an Atonement. — This is the source of the temples, altars, and sacrifices, which have marked the history of every nation under heaven. Man has felt as by a natural instinct that some reparation was necessary to the broken law.

The insufficiency of animal sacrifice. — In the Levitical system there was a remembrance of sin made year by year; but the sin itself could not be purged by such rites. The fact that the worshippers so constantly came back to offer their sacrifices shows that they were not assured. The priests always understood their attitude was an emblem of an unfinished work.

The sufficiency of Christ’s Atonement. — He was willing to be cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of His people; and because He died, there is no longer the “Blot me, I pray thee, out of the book which Thou hast written.” which in Moses’ prayer speaks of uncertainty; but a blessed assurance

that we are at one with God, with each other, and with all holy beings.

October 22

Exodus 33:22

“And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by:”

THAT rock was Christ. In the Divine thought the position of Moses, first on the rock, and afterwards in its cleft, was a moving emblem of the position in which alone we can dare to look out on the sublime progress of God’s glory.

God is always passing by. — In the great movements of history which evolve His plans, and are leading to Christ’s advent; in the passage of the ages, which are His swift chariots; in storm and catastrophe, which break up old forces and forms of evil; in the goodness of His daily mercy; in the revelation of His character — we are always living in the very midst of God’s presence and power.

In our condition of weakness and sinfulness we need a position of stability and shelter from which to look on God. — No man can see that face of awful holiness and love and live. Sir John Herschel says that when sweeping the heavens with his telescope the brilliant Sirius suddenly burst on his view, he nearly fainted. Who then could behold God! But in Jesus, we are stable, established in Him, accepted in the Beloved; and in Him we are covered. The full blaze of the Divine glory is tempered to our gaze; it comes to us through the medium of the pierced hand. We stand on the rock; we are hidden under the covering hand.

Our Rock was cleft. — How scarred are the great Alps!

Their sides have been split by the action of tempest, avalanche, earthquake, frost, and glacier. Hence their clefts. But who shall enumerate all that has been borne by our dear Lord for us! What storms have pelted on Him, that we might have a safe hiding. On Calvary, a niche was hollowed to which a world of sinners may take shelter!

October 23

Exodus 34:29

“And it came to pass, when Moses came down from mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony in Moses’ hand, when he came down from the mount, that Moses knew not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him.”

UNCONSCIOUSNESS of goodness is always a main element in the highest forms of goodness: in the same way that unconsciousness is characteristic of the worst forms of depravity.

“Samson knew not that the Lord had departed from him.”

Directly people become conscious of their superiority to others, and boast of it, it is certain that they have never really seen the beauty of God’s holiness, and have no clear knowledge of the condition of their own hearts. They see that they have been cleansed from their old sins; but they do not perceive that the spirit of selfishness has retreated into the springs of motive and intention.

We are all tempted to this terrible self-consciousness. We are

proud of being humble, complacent for being lowly, self-congratulatory because we take back-seats. In all this we betray the vanity of our pretensions. This sort of goodness is like a thin veneer of mahogany on very common table.

The real goodness is more conscious of the remaining evil than of the acquired good; of the lingering darkness than of the hill-tops smitten with the dawn; of that which has not been attained. But we can only attain this blessed condition by intimate and prolonged fellowship with God, in solitudes where human voices and interests cease to distract. The brightness of which Moses was unconscious was caught from the Presence-chamber of the Divine Loveliness.

Ah, what patterns are seen on the Mount! What cries are uttered there! What visions are seen there! What revelations are made there! What injunctions are received there! Oh for the closer access, the nearer view, the more intimate face to face intercourse, such as is open still to the friends of God!

October

October 24

Exodus 35:35

“Them hath he filled with wisdom of heart, to work all manner of work, of the engraver, and of the cunning workman, and of the embroiderer, in blue, and in purple, in scarlet, and in fine linen, and of the weaver, even of them that do any work, and of those that devise cunning work.”

THERE was an infinite variety in the contributions made to the Tabernacle, from the precious jewels of the rulers to the acacia wood of the poor, and the goats' hair of the women. The completed structure was a monument of the united gifts, handicrafts, and gems of the entire people. But in all there was the unity of the spirit, and plan, and devotion.

In the Church and the world there is a work for each of us to do.

— It may be a very humble part in the great factory — like minding the loom, or stoking the furnace, or fetching materials for the more skilled operatives; but there is a berth for each willing worker, if only the will and way of God are diligently sought and followed.

This work is suited to our special powers. — He who prepares the work for the worker, prepares the worker for the work. Whenever God gives us a task to fulfil, it is because He sees in us faculties for its successful and happy accomplishment, in co-operation with Himself. It is a mistake then to turn back daunted by difficulty and opposition. As Caleb and Joshua said of the

possessors of Canaan, “We be well able to overcome them.”

We must bring our resources and powers to God. — Willing hearts were summoned to bring their offerings to the Lord. The maker of a musical instrument knows best how to develop its waiting music, and He who created and endowed us can make the most of us. Let us not work for Him; but yield ourselves to His hand, and our members as instruments of righteousness for His service. We may differ from all others in the special character of our work; but it matters not, so long as God effects through us His purpose in our creation.

October 25

Exodus 36:5

“And they spake unto Moses, saying, The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work, which the LORD commanded to make.”

THIS is always God’s way. No words could better express the Imperial measure and standard of His dealings with His people.

When He calls us out, as He did Moses, Bezaleel, and Aholiab, and entrusts us with His plan; and when we are careful to work out His specifications; He always makes more than enough provision for all our need.

The redemption in Christ Jesus. — Where sin abounded grace did much more abound. The topmost hills were covered by the waters of the deluge, and the Alpine heights of human rebellion were more than atoned for when Jesus died. Grace over-tops sin.

God’s ability to answer prayer. — He does exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think. We ask great things, and secretly

think that if God were to give only a fraction, we would be thankful.

How we straiten Him! He cannot do much because of our unbelief!

He yearns to do not only enough, but much more than enough for us. See His prodigality in nature: its enameled shells, its profusion of flowers, its swarming life.

In daily provision for spirit, soul, and body. — Give, and it shall be given to you, good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over. God is not niggard. If He withholds, it is that we may cling to the Giver rather than the gift. But for the most part, He gives all things richly to enjoy. He opens His hand, and satisfies.

Whatever thy need, God has much more than enough to meet it. He has riches of grace and of glory. Trust Him, obey Him, appropriate thy share in thy Father's rich provision. Weak and needy as thou art, there is much more than enough strength in God to perfect what concerns thee.

October 26

Exodus 37:6

“And he made the mercy seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half was the length thereof, and one cubit and a half the breadth thereof.”

THIS was the Propitiatory. Beneath it lay the tables of the law, which even Moses had broken, almost as soon as they came into his hands, but which had been renewed. Concealing and covering them lay this golden lid, encrusted with the blood which

successive generations of priests sprinkled there on the Great Day of Atonement.

There can be no doubt that this golden slab sets forth our Savior's obedience unto death. God set Him forth to be "the Propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

Our Lord's obedience is priceless in the Divine esteem. — What pure gold is among metals, that is His advent to do God's will, in comparison with all other endeavors to do it. It takes the first place, and is of peerless beauty and excellence. "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered."

His obedience was to blood. — His wounds tell the story. He held nothing back; but yielded all to blood-shedding. Blood is life, and life is in the Blood: this He freely poured out to meet the claims of justice, and herein gave the sublimest token of His love.

His person and work are the medium of our approach. — In Jesus the Shechinah of God's presence awaits us. On this priceless mercy-seat the Divine Fire trembles, and we may draw near with boldness. We are beloved children: but let us never forget that we are redeemed sinners.

There is a place where Jesus sheds The oil of gladness on our heads; A place than all beside more sweet— It is the blood-stained Mercy-seat.

October 27

Exodus 38:8

"And he made the laver of brass, and the foot of it of brass, of

the lookingglasses of the women assembling, which assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.”

THIS was a good use to put these mirrors to. The women were so deeply interested in the work which was afoot, that they counted no sacrifice too great. But the main suggestion for ourselves is the wisdom of renouncing self-inspection.

The mirror speaks of self-scrutiny. — We are constantly holding up the mirror to our inner life, studying its mechanism and operations. Our fingers often on our pulse; the attention of the soul turned back on itself; the study of symptoms carried to the grievous extent of inducing the diseases which we dread. Of course, where there is evident mischief at work, we do well to take heed; but we must guard against a morbid self-anatomy, a perpetual analysis of motive and intention, an inwardness which diverts our attention from the person of Christ and the performance of duty.

The evils of self-scrutiny. — If we look down into the depths of our own nature, we miss the face of Jesus. To consider self is to become involved in a maze of perplexities and disappointments.

The disease cannot be cured by ceaselessly pondering its symptoms.

The soul cannot lift the soul. Self can never expel the spirit of self.

Its cure. — These women became so interested in the service of the Tabernacle that they were weaned from their mirrors. The better expelled the worse; the higher cast out the lower. Go out of yourself, find some work to do for God and man; seek in the laver the removal of the stains of human sin; find your center in God and His plans; and you will abandon the habit of morbid self-scrutiny.

For every look at self, take ten at Christ: He “healeth all thy diseases.”

October 28

Exodus 39:30

“And they made the plate of the holy crown of pure gold, and wrote upon it a writing, like to the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD.”

ZECHARIAH tells us that these words were to be written on the bells of the horses. The sacred inscription, which stood on the brow of Aaron, designating his separation to his sublime office, was to become incorporated with the business of the farm and city, where burdens were borne and heavy weights drawn with difficulty.

The inscription befits all bells that ring in the home, the shop, the factory. We are to be God’s priests everywhere.

The priest was separated from all impurity. — We must be in the world, but separate from its sin. When evil threatens us from a distance, we must be sensitive to its approach, and quick to put the covering presence of Christ between.

The priest was separated to holy service. — He was keenly sensitive to the honour of Jehovah, and to the demands of his service. Rather be cut down at his altar, like Zechariah the son of Berachiah, than prove a delinquent. We cannot all do the inner service of offering incense and of blessing men, but we can render every act as a sacred service to God; always treading the holy floor, and within sight of the holy presence, and within earshot of the Divine voice; eating, drinking, doing everything for the glory of God. Throughout this chapter we are reminded that

all was made as the Lord commanded Moses; this should be the law of our life.

The priest bore holiness written where all could read it; so should we. — It should not be necessary for us to be labelled. For men to need telling that we are Christians, is a sign that we are far from what we should be. But so to live that the first and slightest glance at us should betray our heavenly calling, is to adorn the Gospel and please our Master.

October 29

Exodus 40:38

“For the cloud of the LORD was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.”

THIS was the cloud of the Shechinah, in the heart of which was fire, the symbol of the presence of God. Probably this fire was always present, but only visible against the background of the surrounding darkness. In the New Testament fire is always associated with the ministry of the Holy Spirit; and in Isaiah (Isaiah 4:5) we learn that in the coming time God would give, on every dwelling-place in Mount Zion, and in all her assemblies, the same cloud of smoke by day, and flaming fire by night, as had been vouchsafed to the Tabernacle where God dwelt. What a glorious revelation is this!

The Holy Spirit brooding over each individual believer. — It is a symptom of the highest life, when God spreads his tabernacle over the soul. We should march only when He lifts up His enfolding presence, rest under His canopy, and recognize the sanctity of all life.

The Holy Spirit resting on each home. — “Every dwelling-place in Zion” must stand for the homes of God’s people. How blessed it is when the home is a temple, and each inmate of the beloved circle a priest! Such homes are rare, but they are possible. Let those who are founding a new family make this their ideal.

The Holy Spirit directing and filling each assembly and believer — As of old the movements of the cloud determined those of the tent and people, so in the Pentecostal Church the Spirit was Guide, Director, Executor. “Separate Me ... to the work to which I have called them.” We must rely most absolutely on Him, waiting for His initiation, His teaching, the settling down of His infinite benediction. Then there will be glory and defence.

October 30

Leviticus 1:9,13,17

“But his inwards and his legs shall he wash in water: and the priest shall burn all on the altar, to be a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD. ... But he shall wash the inwards and the legs with water: and the priest shall bring it all, and burn it upon the altar: it is a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD. ... And he shall cleave it with the wings thereof, but shall not divide it asunder: and the priest shall burn it upon the altar, upon the wood that is upon the fire: it is a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD.”

HOW sweet the offering up of the Son was to the Father! “Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour” (Eph 5:2). The burnt-offering was an imperfect type of His entire devotion to His Father’s will.

When Jesus saw the inability of man to keep the holy law, and volunteered to magnify it, and make it honourable; when He laid aside His glory, and stepped down from His throne, saying, “I delight to do Thy will, O my God” (Ps 40:8); when He became obedient even to the death of the cross — it was as sweet to God as the fragrance of a garden of flowers to us.

Let us never forget the God-ward aspect of the cross. The sacrificial fire fed on every part of the sacrifice, on the inwards as well as the carcase; so did the Holy God delight to witness the spotless and entire devotion of the Son to the great work in which the entire Godhead was most deeply interested. The fragrant graces of Christ were made manifest on the cross, and are perpetuated in his intercession.

There is a sense also in which our consecration to God is fragrant and precious. When we see His claims, and yield to them; when we submit to His will, and commit our lives wholly to His direction; when we offer and present ourselves to Him, a living sacrifice, keeping nothing back — His heart is gladdened, and His fire of complacency feeds on our act. Always count on this; you may feel no thrill, and see no light, but reckon on God, believe that He accepts what you give, and will crown your sacrifice with the fire of Pentecost. Who today will surrender to God, and become an offering of a sweet savour?

October 31

Leviticus 2:1

“And when any will offer a meat offering unto the LORD, his offering shall be of fine flour; and he shall pour oil upon it, and put frankincense thereon:”

THIS type is only true in its fullest extent of the blessed Master;

but as we are to be conformed to His image, we may humbly take the ingredients of the meat offering as indicating various qualities in our personal character and behaviour.

Fine flour. — There should be nothing coarse-grained or rough to the touch; but all even and tender. So that however great the pressure brought to bear on us, we should meet it with perfect grace and gentleness. Jesus reviled not again, but was led as a lamb to the slaughter. David Livingstone said that the promise of Christ was the word of a perfect gentleman. This should be our character.

Oil upon it. — We must be mingled with oil — that is, the Holy Spirit must have access into the secret places of the inner life, and we must have the anointing of the Holy Ghost for service. In Christian work nothing is of any value or permanence, useful to man or pleasing to God, in which the Holy Spirit is not first.

Frankincense. — Every act of our life should emit sweet fragrance towards God. Always moving forward in Christ's triumphant procession, bearing aloft the incense-bowls of thought, action, word, filled with love and praise.

Salt. — "Let your conversation be always with grace, seasoned with salt." (Col 4:6) The words of Jesus were full of grace, and also of truth. There was a pungency and purity and uncorruptness in His speech, which have in every age arrested the progress of the world's evil. Let us give Him our lips.

No leaven — the symbol of the rising of pride and self.

No honey — that which is merely attractive and sensuous.

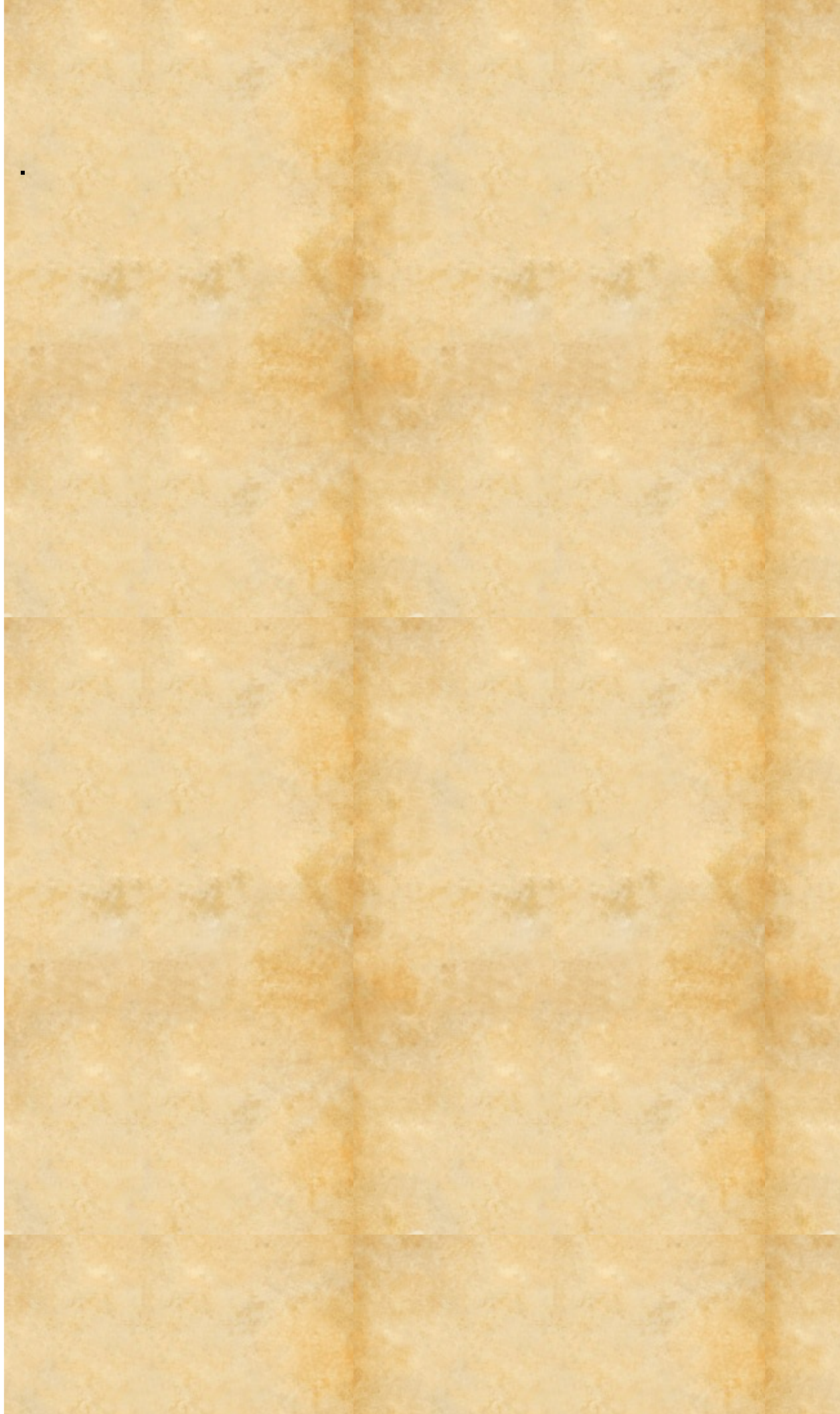


Our Daily Homily

By

F.B. Meyer

- 1. November 1st through 6th**
- 2. November 7th through 13th**
- 3. November 14th through 20th**
- 4. November 21st through 30th**



November

November 1

Mark 14:6

“And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? She hath wrought a good work on me.”

THE lovers of Jesus are often misunderstood. Those who judge only by a utilitarian standard refuse to acknowledge the worth of their deeds. You might as well despise the electric light because it makes no register on a gas-meter. But when the voices of criticism and jealousy are highest, Jesus steps in and casts the shield of His love around the trembling, disconcerted soul, saying, Let him alone. So He speaks still:

To Satan: The adversary stands near to resist and tempt. As Judas criticised Mary, so the Evil One seems at times to pour a perpetual stream of chilling criticism on all we say and do, or he meets us at every turn with some evil suggestion. But Jesus is on the watch, and He will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able to bear; but when heart and flesh fail, He will step in and say, Let him (or her) alone.

To sorrow: We must pass through the fire, and be subjected to the lapidary's wheel; we must drink of His cup, and be baptized with His baptism; we must bear our cross after Him. But He is always on the alert. And whenever the feeble flesh is at an end of its power of endurance, He will step in and say, Let be—it is enough.

To human unkindness: Some of us are called to suffer most from

our fellows; our foes belong to our own household; our brother Cain hates us. It is hard to bear. To have one's motives misunderstood and maligned; to lose one's good name; to be an outcast—all this is hard. But God has planted a hedge about us, and none may pass through it, except He permit. Even Satan recognizes this, as we learn from the Book of Job.

November 2

Mark 15:34

“And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”

THIS was the darkest hour of the Saviour's human life. Lover and friend stood away from Him, and those for whom His blood was being shed covered Him with contumely and abuse. Let us consider:

His quotation of Scripture: He is quoting the first verse of Psalm 22, which is truly known as the Psalm of the Cross. It may be that He recited to Himself that wonderful elegy, in which David was to anticipate so minutely the sufferings of his Lord. What meaning there was for those dying lips in Psalm 22:7 : “All they that see Me laugh Me to scorn”; in verse 13 : “They gape upon Me”; in verse 14 : “All My bones are out of joint”; in verse 17 : “I may tell all My bones”; or in verse 18 : “They part My garments and cast lots.”

What sacred feet trod those well-worn steps!

His vicarious sufferings: There is no possible way of understanding, or interpreting, these words, except by believing that He was suffering for sins not His own; that He was being

made sin for us; that He was bearing away the sin of the world. It is not for a moment conceivable that the Father could have ever seemed to forsake His well-beloved Son, unless He had stood as the Representative of a guilty race, and during those hours of midday, had become the propitiation for the sins of the world.

His perfect example of the way of Faith: In doing the Father's will, He yielded up His life even to the death of the cross. But amid it all He said, "My God, My God." He still held to the Father with His two hands. And His faith conquered. The clouds broke; the clear heaven appeared; He died with a serene faith. "My God" was exchanged for "Father, into Thy hands."

November 3

Mark 16:20

"And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen."

THIS was the secret of the successes of the early Church. Theirs was the simple commission to preach; but wherever they did so, the Lord confirmed their word with signs following. In Jerusalem, Samaria, Antioch, Rome and to the uttermost end of the world, wherever these simple men stood up and made their proclamation, their invisible Lord was present, and His Spirit bore witness.

Nothing less than this will account for the marvellous successes of those early preachers. He who sat at the right hand of God in the attitude of majestic rest was always beside them in the intensity of the most untiring work. What was done by them on earth was wrought by Himself. His right hand and His holy arm got Him the victory.

This blessed partnership has never been repealed. Jesus has never withdrawn from the compact; and if we could only dare to count and reckon on Him, we would find that He was cooperating in church, and Sunday-school, and mission-station. There are a few rules to be observed, however, before we can count upon Him thus:

(1) We must be clean in heart and life. He cannot identify Himself with those who are consciously delinquent.

(2) We must not seek our own glory, but God's, and the pure blessing of men.

(3) We must use the Word of God as our sword, our lever, our balm, our cordial, our charm.

(4) We must be in loving harmony with those who name His name, as He cannot countenance seclusion or uncharitable feeling.

(5) We must by faith claim and reckon upon Him—speaking to Him as to the message before it is delivered, relying on Him during its delivery, and conferring with Him about its effect. Not anxious or elated, but at rest.

November 4

Luke 1:38

“And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.”

THE angel's message meant, for this young, pure-hearted girl, a

great deal of misunderstanding and reproach. It was inevitable that clouds would gather around her character, which would sorely perplex the good man to whom she was betrothed. But as soon as she realized that this lot was ordained for her by God she humbly acquiesced, with these model words of patient faith. Let us often say them:

Firstly: To His commands. God's voice often speaks within our hearts, and no word of His is devoid of power. We must test what seems to be His voice by these three corroborations: First, His Word; second, by the trend of outward circumstances; third, by the advice of Christian people not immediately interested. When these concur, we may take it that God has spoken to us, and whatever the burden of His words we must respond—Be it unto me according to Thy word.

Secondly: To the responsibilities thrust on us. It may be a trusteeship for some dying friend; a charge of orphan children; a babe cast on our parentage; an invalid; a difficult and trying piece of Christian enterprise. But whenever it comes on us, imposed by the evident appointment of our Father, notwithstanding the shrinking of our flesh and the fearfulness of our soul, we must say: Be it unto me according to Thy word.

Thirdly: To any burden of pain and suffering. Are you one whom God has set apart to manifest the power of His grace in suffering and pain? Are you sleepless by night, and helpless by day? Are you likely to spend years in one position, as paralyzed or rheumatic?

Well, still dare to look up and say: Be it unto me according to Thy word.

November 5

Luke 2:14

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”

THESE twain are joined together, and none can sunder them. Do you want peace? Your highest aim must be the glory of God.

Do you seek God’s glory as your highest aim? Then, the inevitable result will be the peace that passeth understanding.

Glory to God in the highest: It was said of the soldiers of the first Napoleon that they were content to die in the ditch if only he rode over them to victory. With their last breath they cried, “Long live the Emperor!” It seemed as though they had lost all thought and care of their own interests so long as glory accrued to his name. So should it be of us. Higher than our own comfort, or success, or popularity, should be the one thought of the glory of our God. Let Christ be honored, loved, exalted, at whatever cost to us.

On earth, peace: It will come, because when the heart has only one aim to follow, it is delivered from dividing and distracting cares. It will come, because the glory of God is so lofty an aim that it lifts the soul into the atmosphere of the heavenly and eternal world, where peace reigns unbroken. It will come, because we are not greatly troubled by the reverses and alternations of fortune that are incident to all work in this world, since the main object is always secure and beyond fear of failure. What though there be the ebb and flow of the wave, yet the tide is certainly coming up the shore, and will presently stand at high-water mark.

November 6

Luke 3:16

“John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:”

THEY had received the negative, water; they were to receive the positive, fire. Water is not sufficient for natures such as ours.

The Baptist pointed to a greater Baptist than himself. Jesus plunges the soul into a baptism of fire.

Fire cleanses: Ore may be mingled with earthly ingredients from which it is imperative to free it. A chisel or pickaxe could not extricate it. But when it is plunged into the furnace, the metal runs out in a molten stream. So our characters are full of impurities and earthly ingredients; but as they are brought into contact with the power of the Holy Spirit, these are eliminated and dropped away, and we attain degrees of purity and love which otherwise had made us unserviceable to our dear Lord. Do not seek to rid yourself of these things as a condition of His gracious cleansing, but seek the baptism of the Spirit, and He will free thee; for He is like a consuming fire.

Fire illuminates: As the express-train hurries the traveller by night through a district where the smelting furnaces are in full blast, his eyes are arrested by their glow, and the very heavens are lurid with the light, reflected for miles. So when the Spirit comes in power to the soul, He teaches us to know God, and truth, and things hidden from the wise and prudent. The fires that sanctify, illuminate us.

Fire kindles: It is contagious. It will spread over an immense area, where inflammable material attracts it. A match may light up a bonfire that will burn for hours. So when the Spirit of God touches a soul, like an unlit candle, it begins to glow; and from it the blessed spark may pass from heart to heart, and church to

church, till an entire continent may blaze with heavenly fire.

November

November 7

Luke 4:18

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,”

AS the Lord emerged from the waters of baptism, the heavens were opened, and the Spirit in a bodily shape descended upon Him and abode. Then His mouth was opened, and His public ministry commenced. Now He stepped forth into the world, saying:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me,

Because He anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor: He hath sent Me to proclaim release to the captives, And recovering of sight to the blind,

To set at liberty them that are bruised, To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.”

The Spirit was given Him without measure, as the power in which He was to cast out devils, preach the Gospel, and glorify His Father by His human life and ministry.

What that scene was in the life of the Lord, Pentecost was for the Church. Then she was anointed for her Divine mission among

men; the unction of the Holy One rested upon her, to be continued and renewed as the centuries slowly passed. What happened for the Church should take place in the history of each member of it. This anointing is for all, is to be received by faith, and is especially intended to equip us for work. Hast thou had thy share? If not, art thou not making a mistake in attempting God's work without it? If Jesus did not put His hand to this work till He was conscious of His anointing, though He was one with the Holy Spirit in an especial sense, how much less should we! Hast thou known it?

Seek it on the threshold of each new enterprise. Be satisfied with nothing less than to be anointed with fresh oil.

November 8

Luke 5:13

“And he put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will: be thou clean. And immediately the leprosy departed from him.”

THIS leper, as the physician-evangelist remarks, was full of leprosy. It was a very aggravated case. He lay in the dust before Jesus. What a contrast! Loathsomeness and Divine beauty; disease and health; humanity at its worst and best; sinner and Saviour; one of Satan's most miserable victims, and the Almighty Deliverer. So, my reader, if thou art conscious of a heart and life which are full of sin, I would have thee meet thy Saviour now.

There is no doubt about His power—even the leper recognized that.

The only doubt was about the Saviour's will: there is, however, no doubt on this score now, since He has healed myriads, and promises healing to all who would come. Throw thyself, then, at

His feet, and ask for cleansing.

“He stretched forth His hand, and touched him.” No one else would have dared to do as much. To touch that flesh, according to the Levitical code, would induce uncleanness. But Jesus shrank not. On the one hand, He knew that the ceremonial restrictions were abolished in Himself: on the other, He desired to teach that sin cannot defile the Divine holiness of the Saviour. Whatever be the stories of sin that are breathed into His ear; whatever the open bruises and putrefying sores which are opened to His touch; whatever the sights and scenes with which He has to cope —none of these can leave a taint of evil in His sinless heart. It would be as impossible for sin to soil Christ as for a plague to contaminate flame. And He will heal thee. Dare to claim it.

“Break up the heavens, O Lord, and far,

Through all yon starlight keen;

Draw me, thy bride—a glittering star,

In raiment white and clean.”

November 9

Luke 6:40

“The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master.”

WE are not perfected yet. There is a great chasm between our highest and our Master’s lowest; between where we stop and He begins; between our light, which is twilight at best, and His meridian glory. When we compare ourselves with ourselves, or with our neighbours, our standard is altogether too low; we

should compare ourselves with Him, the beloved Master. Job, who was reputed perfect, abhorred himself, and repented in dust and ashes when he had seen God, of whom he had formerly only heard.

But we shall be perfected one day. That when has a hopeful ring.

But to what period does the Master point? Not till sorrow, sanctified by God's grace, has done its work; not till the snow and frost, the light shower and the bitter wind, the earth and sun, have contributed their shares to the desired quota. Not till the perfect image of Jesus has emerged from the sculptured stone; not till the molten metal reflects each lineament of the glorified Lord.

When we are perfected we shall be as our Master. "We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." It seems altogether too much to expect! To think that we shall be changed into His image; that we shall bear His impress; that we shall be as like Him as Gideon's brethren to Gideon, of whom the princes of Midian testified that they were like the children of a king. Yet it shall be so.

The Lord Jesus became like unto us in our low estate, that we should become like Him in His glory. There must ever be the limitations of the creature as compared with Him by whom all things were made. But in our measure there shall be the same perfect beauty—His beauty upon us—for a mountain lake may as perfectly reflect the wide blue heaven as an ocean.

November 10

Luke 7:13

"And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not."

NO widow stands by the bier of her only son, no mother by the empty cot of her babe, no lover beside the fading beauty of his beloved—but the Son of Man, unseen but glorious, is at hand, seeing, understanding, touched with compassion, and saying, in His tenderest tones, Weep not!

Weep not: Love is eternal. Hast thou forgotten that there are three things which abide forevermore, the greatest of which is love? Is it likely that those blessed ties which have woven us to others can be snapped by death, which can only touch the body, but is not able to reach the soul? Is not love of God—and can God's love change, and pass away? No; though severed from your sight, the dear ones that are gone are thine today, and have not forgotten, but love thee still. Without us they cannot be made perfect.

Weep not: Recognition of the beloved dead is certain. Did not Mary and the women, Peter and five hundred more, recognize Jesus after His resurrection? Is He not the same Man? Are we not to be like Him? Recognition went so far, in His case, that the Magdalene recognized the very tones of His voice, when He said Mary, and she answered Rabboni. Yes, though refined and purified, the face thou hast loved shall smile, and the tones that have made thy heart-music shall speak again. Weep not!

Weep not: They shall rise again, nevermore to be separated. The Lord raised this youth to life; but there had to be another parting, when his mother or he died. But when thy dear ones are reunited to thee, there will be no more partings. There shall be no more sea.

Thy heart shall find its mate. Thou and he shall go no more out.

November 11

Luke 8:46

“And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me.”

AMID the pressure of the crowd that crushed on Him from all sides, Jesus detected the light touch of one thin hand, which drew from Him healing virtue. We may be very near Christ, and throng Him, without touching; but no one can touch Him, however lightly, without deriving the very grace needed.

We think of Jesus today amid the thronging crowds of angels and spirits of the just made perfect. Amid their voices will ours be heard? Amid the pressure of their attendance on His sacred person will He stay to recognize our poor trembling touch? Amid the vast interests that depend on Him, the government of the universe, the holding together and consistence of all things, is there any likelihood of our need asserting itself successfully? See, He is hastening on to raise the dead; there is the daughter of many a Jairus waiting for His summons, in the cemeteries and sleeping places of the dead. Will He stay for me? Yes, always.

There is the touch of prayer and faith. Thou canst never exercise it, however simply, without eliciting an immediate response. The conductor can detect the tiny note of a piccolo in an orchestra; and Christ is moved by a whisper, a sigh, a tear, a touch. There may be a good deal of mistake and superstition, as there was in this woman, who seemed to have thought that virtue clung to His robes; but He will distinguish the soul of holy trust amid many false ingredients. There is also the touch of affection. He knew when the woman crept to kiss His feet. He did not instantly speak of it, but said afterward, “From the time I came in she hath not ceased to kiss My feet.” Not one loving expression from thy heart to His is lost on Him!

February 12

Luke 9:30

“And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias:”

WHAT a spectacle this was, on the slopes of Lebanon, with light transcending that of the moonlight shining in the upper heights! And what converse! Possibly that transfiguration was an example of the way in which Adam and all his race might have passed into heaven, had not death come on us all through sin; and therefore it was the greater proof of the love of our dear Lord, when He deliberately turned from all the radiant light and took the way of the cross. His death is here called an exodus: such is the Greek word rendered decease. How much these two great souls, Moses and Elijah, had to say about it: the one representing the law, the other the prophets.

Moses would remind Him of the lamb that would be slain before the children of Israel could escape from Egypt, of the rock that must be smitten, before the water could flow forth for the thirsty crowds; of the serpent that must be fixed on the pole, before the dying Israelites could look and live.

Elijah would remind the Lord of Psalm 22, beginning with a wail and ending with praise; of Isaiah 53:1-12, finishing with a burst of triumph; and many other sacred and familiar passages.

And after all it was only an exodus, the going forth of His spirit from the Time-sphere to the Eternal; from contact with a very weary world to victory and joy-mending. Lighted by the Shekinah glory; following through the Red Sea of Blood; hastening to the morning, with its vision of enemies strewn dead on the seashore.

The memory of this talk so far robbed death of its terror, in the heart of one of the disciples at least, that afterward he described his own death as an exodus (2 Peter 1:15).

February 13

Luke 10:18

“And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.”

THIS was Christ’s vision of the effect of His work in man’s nature, and on man’s behalf. For ages Satan had vaunted his power over man; but now and henceforward the demon-nature was to be vanquished by the name and nature of Jesus Christ. “The demons are subject to us in Thy name.” Whenever you are tempted by the demon of alcohol, of passion, of jealousy, or any other, claim instantly the protection of the Name which is above every name; make the Name and Nature of Jesus your strong tower into which you shall run and be safe; realize all that He stands for and you will find that the demons will be subject to you. In your life also, Satan will fall from heaven, and be trodden under your feet.

And what is true in your own life is true also of your influence over others. If you dare to live in the risen Christ, you share His empire and all the fruits of His victory over Satan. He gives you authority over serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy. The Christ nature within you becomes the dominant, triumphant power to which all power must ultimately yield. Dare to use it. In conflict with the demon spirits that haunt so many lives; in antagonizing the giant forces that are so strongly entrenched in our natural life, the ravages of vice—be sure to rely, not on numbers or organization, but on the name of Jesus, used not as a charm, but as representing His living and ascended might.

And let it be carefully noted that as the success of these disciples over a few demons in the villages and towns of Israel

reacted on the balance of power in the heavenlies, so there is no victory won anywhere by any lonely disciple, or handful of disciples, that does not react on the entire battlefield.

November

November 14

Luke 11:1

“And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

IT was a wise and good request, prompted by the Saviour’s own practice. He did not, in the first instance, command His disciples to pray; but He gave Himself to the blessed practice of prayer, and this made them eager to learn and practice the holy art.

This is the best way of inculcating new and holy habits on those who surround us. Do not begin by exhorting them; but by living before them a life so holy, so unselfish, so consecrated and devout, that they shall spontaneously approach you, saying, “Give us your secret; tell us how we may do and become as you.” It is a holy life which constitutes our best pulpit.

We should daily ask the Master to teach us to pray. Each time we kneel in prayer we may well preface our petitions with the sentence: “We know not what we should pray for as we ought; but by Thy Holy Spirit, Lord, teach us to pray.” And probably the Lord’s answer will fall into suggestions, borrowed from the form and model of prayer which He gave His disciples. It has been called the Lord’s Prayer; it should be called the Disciples’.

Address prayer to the Father, through the Son. Do not be selfish in prayer; but look out on the needs of others, incorporating them in every petition—us, we, our. Remember, you are speaking

to your Father, and that His honor and glory should have a paramount and foremost place. If you desire first the hallowing of His name, and the coming of His kingdom, all your personal needs and desires will fall easily and naturally into their place, which will be a comparatively subordinate one. You will need forgiveness as often and as regularly as your daily bread. Be also direct and definite in prayer.

November 15

Luke 12:11

“And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say:”

SO often through this discourse the Lord refers to anxiety: “Take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer” (Luke 12:11). “Which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit?” (Luke 12:25). “Why take ye thought?” (Luke 12:26).

There must have been a great strain on the crowds who listened to Him; and there was every likelihood of the strain becoming even greater for His disciples as the years passed on. So, also, the characteristic of our age is anxious strain.

But the heart of Jesus was always at peace. His life was calm amid the storms of life; as the coral-island, with its fronded palms and lagoons of still water, is peaceful amid the storm-tossed ocean, because of the protection of its reef. The surf breaks there, but does not intrude further. The secrets of Jesus were the perpetual presence of God in His soul, and His never-faltering faith in the loving, careful providence of God in all the experiences of His chequered life.

Can we not have this? We may if we are willing to pay the price.

If we will resign or surrender our will utterly to Him; if we will tear down every veil that might hide His face, and throw open our whole being to His indwelling and use; if we will cease scheming, planning, devising, and fall back on the absolute care and arrangements of God; if we will learn to reckon on God as absolutely as on any resourceful human friend; if we will dare to believe that God holds Himself responsible for the sustenance and equipment for duty of all who absolutely seek His glory—then,

“Our lives shall be full of sunshine,

And the cares that infest the day,

Shall fold up their tents like the Arabs, And as silently steal away.”

November 16

Luke 13:24

“Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.”

THE question which the disciples asked was for their gratification and curiosity. Man has always been curious to know what will be the numerical result of the Redeemer’s work.

But to such questions the Lord had no reply. He was only eager that none of those whom He loved should miss the full measure of blessedness that was within His reach; therefore He bade each be sure of entering the narrow door, so narrow that there is no room to carry through it the love of self, the greed of gain and the thirst for the applause and rewards of the world.

We may be saved from the penalty of sin by one single glance at the Saviour, who lived, and died, and lives forevermore; but we cannot be saved in the deepest meaning of the word, in the sense of being delivered from the love and power of sin, unless we are willing to enter through the door, so constructed and straight, that it seems impossible to effect an entrance. Art thou willing for this, to leave behind thy amassed and hardly-gained treasures, thy luggage and impedimenta, thy jewels and gew-gaws, thy certificate of merit and credentials, thy notions of self-importance, the weights which thou hast carried so long, the pillows with which thou art always sparing thyself from the stern realities and efforts of a noble life? If thou art willing for this, and prepared to strive, even to the rending of thyself asunder, then thou shalt be saved from the love and tyranny of that wild, dark power, which, hitherto, has always dragged thee downward.

It is not enough to eat and drink of the blessed memorial supper, nor to listen to the voice of Jesus teaching in His Church. Many may do all this, and yet never be included in the Kingdom of Heaven.

November 17

Luke 14:26,27,33

“If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. ... So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.”

THREE times Christ repeats these solemn words; and it may be that earnest men have done injury to His cause, which they desired to serve, by omitting these stringent conditions in their Gospel invitations. It is quite true that whosoever will may come

and take; that whosoever believeth in Him shall never perish; that the door of mercy stands open wide. But it is equally true that the faith that saves must pass such tests as these; and if it does not, it is not of the quality which can bear the soul through the swelling billows of the river of death. These three tests may be classified thus:

Separation: It sometimes happens in the disciple's life that Christ's work lies in one direction, whilst the blessed ties of home lie in another. Tender voices call; loving hands reach out to hold him. Here the plough is waiting in its furrow; there the hearth with its tender memory and association. At such times, for the true man, there can be but one choice.

Crucifixion: Everyone has his own cross—some one thing in which the will of God crosses his will. Jesus made that cross, and bids us take it up and bear it after Himself. Yet how many evade it, flee from it, postpone it. They think they can follow Him apart from it; but it is impossible. We can only follow the Crucified when we bear each his own cross. And to shrink from it shows that we are not disciples.

Renunciation: All we have must be gladly yielded when Christ asks for it. If the accumulation of a life be on one scale and Christ in the other, we must choose Christ, come what may to the rest, or we must abandon our title to discipleship.

November 18

Luke 15:28

“And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and intreated him.”

THE elder brother is the dark contrast which heightens the glowing picture of the repentant prodigal; as the gargoyle does

the beauty of the angel faces on the cathedral front.

When we look at sin, not in its theological aspects, but in its everyday clothes, we find that it divides itself into two kinds. We find that there are sins of the body and sins of the disposition; or, more narrowly, sins of the passions, including all forms of lust and selfishness, and sins of the temper. The prodigal is the instance in the New Testament of sins of passion—the elder brother of sins of temper. Now we might be disposed to think that the prodigal is the worse sinner of these two; but it is at least worthy of remark that as the story ends, we see him found, forgiven, restored; whilst the elder brother is still outside the house, and an absentee from the feast. Does Christ mean that the ill-tempered murmuring of the Pharisee is more hopeless than the passion of the publican and sinner? We must not press the thought too far; but we may at least ask whether we are harbouring, beneath a very respectable, moral exterior, the spirit of the elder brother, who plods daily to work, and is accounted a paragon of filial dutifulness, but is left without the door.

One has made a careful analysis of the ingredients that went to make up that one spiteful speech; they come out thus: jealousy, anger, pride, uncharity, cruelty, self-righteousness, sulkiness, touchiness, doggedness. “His speech, like the bubble escaping to the surface of the pool, betrays the rottenness beneath.” Let us carefully read our hearts, lest there be any trace of this spirit in ourselves, when others are pressing into the kingdom with joy.

February 19

Luke 16:12

“And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man’s, who shall give you that which is your own?”

OUR Lord is speaking of money and its use.

1. He describes money: It is so associated with unrighteousness that He speaks of it as the unrighteous mammon. It was as though the inveterate money-maker, who will get money at all costs, was an idolater, prostrating himself daily in the temple of the heathen deity who bore that name. In His judgment, also, it is a very little thing (Luke 16:10). We only know how little when we compare it with the immortal qualities of a lowly character. At least, it is not the true riches (Luke 16:11). Moreover, it is not our own—it is clearly another's—God's (Luke 16:12). We have nothing that we have not received.

2. He indicates the main use of money: It is God's; but He puts it into our hands to watch the use we will make of it, before He entrusts to us the true riches of eternity— just as you will test a child with a toy watch before you dare to place in his hands a real one. If he is destructive of the one, you hesitate to hand him the other; whilst if he is careful, you feel able to consign to his care some family heirloom. So God is testing men by giving them money that He may know how far to trust them in the mart of the New Jerusalem.

3. He arouses us to fidelity: Care for God's interests as much as the wasteful and unfaithful steward cared for his own. He used his master's money to secure a welcome to the debtor's houses when he lost his situation. But God has so arranged it, that if you use His money aright, you shall not only win His approbation, but His interests will be so coincident with yours, that when the world fades from view, those whom you have helped for God's sake shall welcome you to heaven.

November 20

Luke 17:20

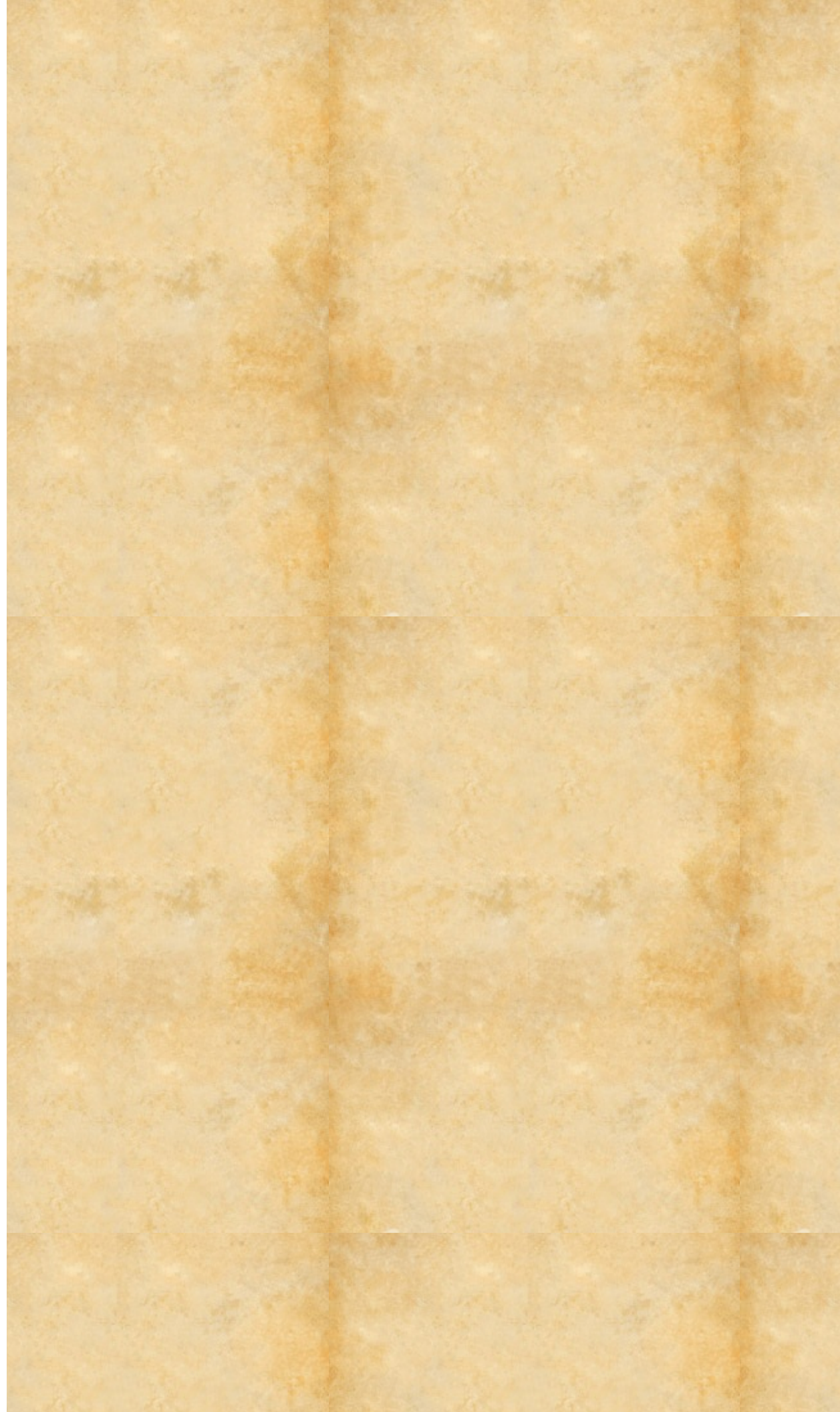
“And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the

kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation:"

THE Kingdom is "in mystery" just now. It is hidden from mortal eye, because the King Himself is withdrawn from the visible sphere. The creation groans and travails for its manifestation. He must be manifested before we can be manifested with Him in glory. In the meanwhile, it is not without, but within; not compelling human attention, but pervading human hearts. Let us remember this when we are lamenting the slow progress of Christianity in the world. It appears to recede almost as quickly as it advances; what it gains in one place it loses in another. If heathen lands are receiving Christ, are not the populations of Christian lands departing from Him? Stay; you cannot tell! It is useless to argue! There may be much more good working than you know. For every bold confessor there are probably seven thousand who have not bowed to Baal.

When we are tempted to estimate our success by numerical results, when our church is crowded; our roll of communicants constantly augmented; and the money revenue large—we are disposed to think that the cause of Christ is really advancing in our midst. It may be so. But sometimes, where numbers are scant and difficulties many, a yet deeper and more lasting result is being achieved.

When we are lamenting the apparent slowness of our growth in grace, when you do not feel as you would; nay, to judge by your emotional life, when you fear lest you are positively receding in the divine life; when you think that the quality and quantity of your fruit unto God is decreasing—Stay; the deepest work is not always the most obvious. Before the mole appears above the wave, years of work have been expended where no eye can see; but every stone tells in the result.



November

November 21

Luke 18:6

“And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith.”

THE force of this parable lies in its succession of vivid contrasts, which rise to an irresistible climax. The judge is unjust. He neither fears God nor regards man. His one idea is to extort as much money as he can from the prisoners who desire to get out of jail, and from those that want to keep them in, or put others to share their fate. But God is our Father, unimpeachable in His integrity, and only eager to promote our welfare.

The judge had no personal interest in the claimant. She had no personal attraction for him. Had she been possessed of property, he might have cared more. But now he looked on her as a pest that plagued and worried him. But we are God’s elect, over whom His tender heart yearns. Did He not choose us before all the worlds unto His glory?

The judge answered the widow’s cry just to save himself trouble. Whenever he went to his seat, there she was. Though he had refused to hear her a score of times, there was her voice again, as clear and penetrating as ever. She had been forcibly hurried from his presence by his officials, and she had been borne screaming and remonstrating into the rear; but she never knew herself defeated. At last he could bear it no longer, and gave orders that her patrimony should be restored.

And will not God do as much, as, generation after generation, He sees His Church, like a widowed soul, oppressed by the great enemy and avenger? As He hears the cries of martyrs and saints; the perpetual prayer, Come, Lord Jesus; the insolent boast of the foe—will He not arise and avenge? Yes, verily, speedily! But it may seem long to us, because one thousand years with Him are as one day.

November 22

Luke 19:34

“And they said, The Lord hath need of him.”

OH, could I hear Thee say as much of me, my blessed Lord!

Here, where two ways meet, I have been standing long, waiting for a purpose worthy to fill my soul, and task the powers that are, as yet, only in the first burst of young life.

Thou needest much and many in Thy great redemptive work.

The boat to cross the lake; the line to catch the fish; the bread and fish to feed the crowds; the baskets to gather up the fragments; the chalice to hold the wine; the dish to hold the sop; the little child to be the text for Thy sermon; the clay for the blind man's eyes; the tender women to minister of their substance; the apostles to preach Thy Gospel. Canst Thou not find a niche for me also?

Thou requirest undivided loyalty. Born of the Virgin's womb, laid in death where man's dust had never come, Thou must have a colt on which none had ever sat. I cannot give Thee a heart which has never known another; but I profess to Thee that there is no rival now. Thou mayest have all. Thine is the Kingdom.

Thou requirest patience and humility. But these, also, Thou hast taught. I have waited patiently till this glad hour, and am quieted and humbled like a weaned child. No longer do I seek great things for myself. It is enough for me to be and do anything, if only Thou shalt be glorified.

Thou requirest, perhaps, but one brief service. To serve Thee always with increasing fervor would be my choice; but if Thou needest only one brief, glad hour of ministry, like that the good Ananias did to Thy Church when he ministered to Saul, then be it so. To prepare for it, and revert to it, would be my satisfaction in having lived.

November 23

Luke 20:24

“Shew me a penny. Whose image and superscription hath it?

They answered and said, Caesar’s.”

OUR Lord more than once compared men to coins. He spoke of the woman who lost one piece of silver, and searched till she had found it. The analogy might be carried out in many particulars; for as the ore passes through the crucible, and many another process, before it is stamped with the image of the sovereign, so do souls experience many fiery trials ere they can receive and keep the impression of heaven’s mint, which is the face of Jesus.

Whose image dost thou bear?—Is there a clear-cut outline of the features of Christ, so manifest that those who touch and handle you are irresistibly reminded of Him; or have the features of your King, which were once clear-cut, become effaced?

Whose is thy superscription? Is A. D. there?—the year in which you were born into the kingdom of God, the year of our Lord, the

year of your eternal life? Is “*Dei gratia*” there? (By the grace of God). So that all the while those who know you magnify the exceeding riches of His love as manifested in you. Is “*Christus Rex*” there? (Christ the King). Are you absolutely Christ’s—to serve and to obey? Is “*Fid. Def.*” there? (Defender of the Faith). Do you keep the deposit of Christ’s holy Gospel, as you look to Him to keep the deposit which you have committed to Him? Is the lion on the quarterings?—speaking of the strength of the Lion of Judah imparted to your soul. Is the harp amongst them?—indicating the subjection of every string of your life to His finger. Is the crown there?—indicating how absolutely you have placed the empire of your nature upon the brow of your Lord. Then weave together the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valley as the symbol of His reign.

November 24

Luke 21:36

“Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.”

LET us never release the girdle from around our loins, nor throw ourselves listlessly upon the bank to drink, whilst the enemy may be stealing up against the wind. It is the art of our great enemy to fill the air with the heavy breath of the poppy; that, like the lotus-eaters of the old legend, we may be indisposed for the perils and toils of our onward journey.

Watch ye in the season of festivity. When merry voices fill the chamber with mirth, and jokes pass; old stories are retold; quaint anecdotes circulated—remember to look frequently up into the Master’s face, to discover if aught has covered it with shame, or filled it with regret. Let not your heart be overcharged with surfeiting drunkenness.

Watch ye in hours of stress and anxiety. These will come between the soul and Christ, oppressing us with anxious care, leading us to think too much of the things which are seen and transient, and filling our hearts with dismay, as though the future would find us orphans and homeless, because the storm had swept away some few gatherings of the earth's perishable stores. When stocks are falling, business declining and competition increasing;

Watch! Make supplication! Stand before the Son of Man as those whom He cannot forget or forsake.

Watch ye in seasons of tender love. We wear armor abroad, but when we come within the closed door of the home, and our hearts expand beneath the genial warmth of kindred natures, how apt we are to cry, Now, surely, we may unbend, ungird, and let nature have free course. But the Master says, Watch ye at every season; and He reminds us that we never cease to stand before the Son of Man.

November 25

Luke 22:31

“And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:”

THE Master apparently did not pray that temptation should be withheld. The quick eye of His affection had discerned the tempter's approach. His quick ear had detected Satan's request of the Father; as though he said, “Let me have the chance for one brief hour, and I will show that these men, so far from being gold, silver, and precious stones, are only wood, hay, and stubble.” But though He knew all this, the Master did not request that the winnowing wind should be withheld. Why? Because

temptation is part of the present order of the world. Why it is so we cannot tell; that it is so we know assuredly. Why the Almighty permitted the evil one to intrude into paradise, and to assail every single soul of woman born, that has passed to years of consciousness, we shall probably never understand until mystery drops from our eyes in the meridian light of heaven. We only are sure that the permission of temptation is not inconsistent with His almightiness or beneficence.

Temptation tests character and reveals us to ourselves and to one another. Was it not well that Peter should know how weak he was; that he might become truly penitent and converted? Was it not befitting that Judas should be exposed before the day of Pentecost?

Was it not best that the foundation stones of the Church should be well tested? It is better to learn our weakness now and here than at the Judgment seat.

But if Satan tempts, our Advocate pleads. He anticipates the advent of temptation by storing up His prayers. He warns the soul when the hawk begins to hover. If He may not arrest temptation, He will at least ask that our faith may not fail; and will seek us out as He did Peter.

November 26

Luke 23:43

“And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.”

TODAY!—Dost thou ask Me to remember thee at some distant moment, when the kingdom of which I am now laying the foundations shall have become the all-conquering kingdom of the world? Thou needest not wait so long. I say unto thee that

this very day, when yonder sun now scorching above our heads is sinking in the west, and the shadows lie long from our crosses, and the people have gone to their homes, thou shalt be with Me, where the sun shall no more be thy light by day, nor the moon by night, but the Lord shall be thy everlasting light.

Thou shalt be with Me. Dost thou ask only to be remembered; that I should give thee the glance of a thought; that I shall recall thy voice and face for a brief moment? Thou shalt be with Me, for I will await thee on the confines of My home. The throngs which escort Me shall behold thee by My side, and when I sit upon My sapphire throne I will give thee to sit beside Me, the one who, in My mortal anguish, trod the vale of the shadow, and who, with Me, shall tread the paths of light and glory.

In Paradise. I am here regaining Paradise. All that was lost is being recovered. Within a few hours it will be Mine to give; within a few hours its key will be in My hand; within a few hours thou shalt walk with Me there in the cool of the day, and the angel that drove out Adam shall keep watch lest the Serpent enter to molest.

Verily, I say unto thee. All this is fixed and certain. I say “verily”

to thee because the Father hath said “verily” to Me. Oh, trembling soul, who hast fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before thee, thou mayest have strong encouragement from My Word and death.

November 27

Luke 24:7

“Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.”

THESE are the two poles of Christian life—Death and Resurrection. That which was true in the history of our Lord must have its counterpart in our own experiences. That Jesus died and rose again is not only the dual basis of justification, but it is the dual basis of sanctification. Did He die? Then we must arm ourselves with the same mind. The crucifixion was not finished on Calvary; it has continued through all ages, and will continue unto the end; not in its mediatorial and atoning aspect, but with the view of each man denying himself and taking up his cross to follow daily. So also we are perpetually leaving the things of time and sense where Christ left His grave-clothes, and are pressing up and on in the wake of His resurrection and ascension.

It is a solemn question, how far we are participating in this daily dying and daily rising. “Be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed. Mortify your members which are upon the earth; seek those things which are above. If one died for all, then all died; that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them and rose again.”

It is not that the old nature dies, but that we die to it. As a matter of experience and walk, the results will be very similar from either of these ways of stating the fact. But it is true to Scripture and experience also to speak of reckoning ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin—that is, the root-principle which so often fruits in sins.

Reckon that the grave of Christ lies between thee and the solicitations of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Deem thyself dead to thyself. All this, however, is only possible through the Holy Spirit.

November 28

John 1:50

“Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these.”

GOD’S dealings with us are always on an ascending scale. If we see clearly the lowest rung in the heavenly ladder, whilst we behold, the veil of mist will part, and we shall see the next above it, and then the next, and, in due order, the next; and so the steps that slope away through darkness up to God will always be beckoning to greater and yet greater things.

Have you known Christ as the Word? He is more; both Spirit and Life.

Has He become flesh? You shall behold Him glorified with the glory He had before the worlds.

Have you known Him as Alpha, before all? He is also Omega.

Have you met John? You shall meet One so much greater, that the latchet of His shoes the Baptist shall deem himself unworthy to unloose.

Do you know the baptism by water? You shall be baptized by fire.

Have you beheld the Lamb on the Cross? You shall behold Him in the midst of the throne.

Have you seen the Spirit descend as a dove on one head? You shall see Him come as a fire upon an unnumbered multitude.

Have you followed the Christ to the slight booth in the Jordan Valley? You shall enter with Him into mansions of eternal glory.

Do you acknowledge Him as King of Israel? You shall hear the acclamations that salute Him as King of the worlds.

Live up to all you know, and you shall know more. Be all you can, and you shall become more. Do all that your two talents permit, and you will find yourself ruler over four cities.

November 29

John 2:10

“And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now.”

THE world gives its best first. As youth and beauty are ushered into the banqueting-room of life, the world spreads the table with its best. The zest of enjoyment is keen in those young days, but it is soon satiated; the delicacies with which the table is spread pall, and the appetite, unduly stimulated at the first, demands coarser and more passionate delights to stimulate. At last the table is served with provision, from which, in the first days, the banqueters would have turned away disgusted.

But if you let the King lead you into His banqueting house, beneath His banner of love you will find yourself feeding on dainties which never satiate nor pall—which whet the appetite and give the taste a more delicate appreciation of the vintages of heaven.

You may say this of the Word of God. At the beginning of Christian life it is full of meaning and inspiration; but as the years pass, and we realize ever more of its helpfulness, we repeat the refrain, “Thou hast kept the best until now!”

You may say this of Christian love. Let two love in Christ, and instead of their affection waning, as so often happens in the world, they will discover that the fellowship, which began in comradeship, will end in a sacramental meal; truest, purest,

deepest enjoyment being kept for Paradise.

You may say it of heaven. Neither hath eye seen nor heart conceived the things, even now and here, that God has prepared for those that love Him. But so soon as the redeemed spirit shall awaken in the uncreated glory of God's presence, it will exclaim,

"The half was never told; Thou hast kept the best until now." At every moment and always God is giving His best.

November 30

John 3:27

"John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven."

AFTER six months of marvellous ministry, in which the Baptist had seen the whole land at his feet, had gathered a band of disciples, and introduced the Messiah to the Jewish people, he found the crowds dwindling. His disciples viewed with feelings of chagrin the transference of popular interest from their master to Him of whom he had borne witness.

What John the Baptist meant by it: He realized that the crowds, the hushed attention, the swift response, the power of speech, the message, the deep repentance, the office of morning star heralding the Dayspring from on high, had been the gift of God. He had nothing which he had not received; he would have received nothing, except God had given it to him. Whether these things went or came was a matter altogether beyond his control. His part was to receive and use what God gave; and then return to Him, at His bidding, the saved talent. This forbade alike pride and despondency.

What we may learn by it: Humility and peace. Humility. Is this the

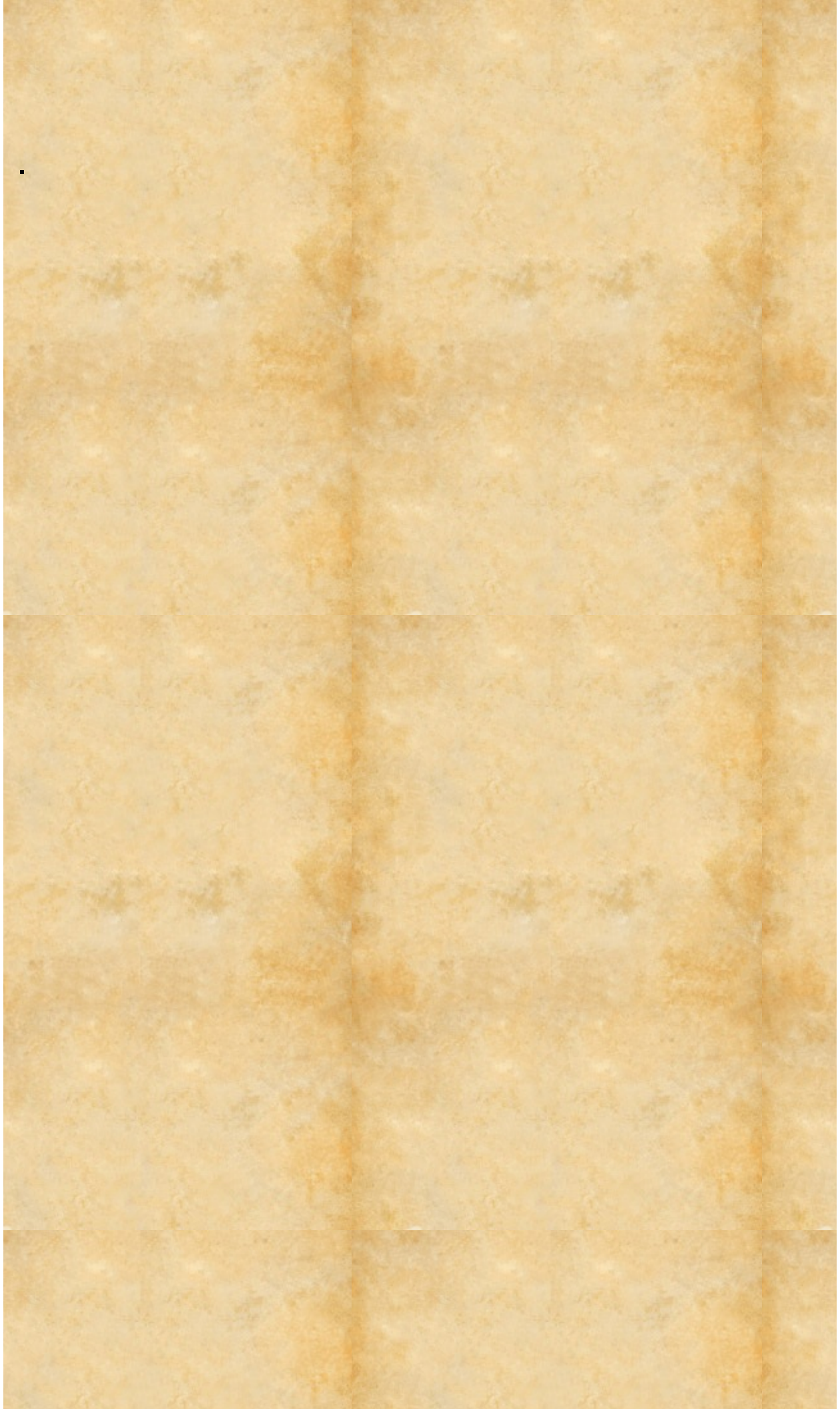
time of your prosperity? Crowds wait on your words; mighty movements circle around you; glorious results follow on your plans! Do not be puffed up. Boast not yourself. “Who maketh thee to differ? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? but if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?” Peace. If it is not due to your lethargy or sloth that the crowds have ebbed away, and that the tide of conversions has dropped below its former level, be at peace. These are things which the Holy Spirit worketh, dividing to each one severally even as He will.

Our Daily Homily

By

F.B. Meyer

- 1. December 1st through 11th**
- 2. December 12th through 18th**
- 3. December 19th through 25th**
- 4. December 26th through 31st**



December

December 1

Psalm 1:3

“And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.”

“IF a man abide not in Me,” said our Lord, “he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered.” (John 15:6) The same thought is here. Thrust down your rootlets to the oozy river bed, and there is no doubt about your continuing earnest, patient, God-filled life. The sun of temptation may strike you with sword-like beams, but you will have a source of supply which they cannot exhaust. The secret of an unwithering beauty is in the Word of God, delighted in and meditated upon day and night. And what is the Word of God, but the life of God translated into human speech?

Wean yourself from all beside, and learn to feed on God.

Withdraw your rootlets from men and things, and let them travel to the river of God, which is full of water. Close other doors, and open those that lead out on to the terrace, whence you may behold the far-spread landscape of what He is, and says, and is willing to be to us all.

Note that word meditate. (Psalm 1:2) The root must lie in contact with the stream, and the soul must steep itself in the Word of God.

We must give the truth time to enter and pervade our souls. We

must have retreats, shut away from the rush of life, up and down the glades of which we may tread. These retreats are oftener found within the soul; than without. Just as the temple of old, there was Solomon's porch, where Jesus walked, so in the temple within there are closes and cloisters, where we may commune with our heart, and be still.

December 2

Psalm 2:7

"I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee."

THE Holy Ghost tells us that this was addressed by the Father to the Son in His Resurrection (see Acts 8:33). It was from the grave that our Lord stepped up to His mediatorial throne, whence all the hatred of His foes has had no power to dislodge Him, and never shall have. Death is a birth unto the true life. Jesus was the Firstborn from the dead; we too are to be born out of the darkness of the grave into the Life Immortal.

"There is a beyond, and he who has once caught a glimpse of it is like a man who has gazed at the sun. Wherever he looks, he sees everywhere the image of the sun. Speak to him of finite things, and he will tell you that the finite is impossible and meaningless without the infinite. Speak to him of death, and he will call it birth; speak to him of time, and he will call it the mere shadow of eternity."

But is it not wonderful that He has begotten us also unto a living hope by the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead to an incorruptible inheritance? We are the sons of the resurrection. In Jesus we are already on resurrection-ground. Our sun shall no more go down, nor our moon withdraw herself. For us, at least, God hath destroyed "the veil that is spread over

all nations.” (Isaiah 25:7) Do not wonder, then, at the hate of men. They will rage, and imagine vain things; they will take counsel together. It cannot be otherwise.

Thou mayest expect, then, to be bruised by thy brethren, and hated by the world. But at such times Christ will come to thee, and give thee fresh accessions of His resurrection life, carrying thee into the hidden house of His abiding, and confirming the weak knees and the heart that faints.

January 3

Psalm 3:3

“But thou, O LORD, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head.”

OH, my soul, hast thou made God thy glory? Others boast in their wealth, beauty, position, achievements: dost thou find in God what they find in these? Thou needest safety from the shocks of time and change: is He thy shield? Thou must have something outside of thee, to complete thy blessedness: is He thine ideal? Thy head is drooping like a flower-cup—it sadly needs the dexterous hand of the Gardener:

“Nothing resting in its own completeness Can have worth or beauty: but alone— Because it leads and lends to further sweetness, Fuller, higher, deeper than its own— Life is only bright when it proceedeth Towards a truer, deeper life above; Human love is sweetest when it leadeth To a more divine and perfect love.”

God around us as a shield, God above and within us as an ideal, God lifting up the tired and sorrowful face — this was David’s threefold conception of his relation with God. All around men

were filled with wrath at him. He heard their harsh voices, and what they said. Nevertheless he comforted, and stayed his heart with the words, But Thou, O Lord. Ah, what an instant change they make!

“We kneel, and all round us seems to lower; We rise and all, the distant and the near, Stands forth in sunny outline, brave and clear; We kneel, how weak — we rise, how full of power!”

Ah, these Buts! What a difference they make in our lives. There is always the hedge of God’s care, always an illimitable reserve of power and help within our reach, of which we may avail ourselves; and we are so sure of it, that we lay ourselves down in peace to sleep, though the foe in thousands encamps around.

December 4

Psalm 4:3

“But know that the LORD hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the LORD will hear when I call unto him.”

THE Lord sets apart for His own enjoyment. — “A garden inclosed is my sister.” (Song of Solomon 4:12) Out of the wild prairie Christ encloses favored bits of land, that they may become fair gardens in which to walk. God must have spirits with which He can commune; and therefore He shuts selected ones away in sick chambers, in loneliness, and in prisons, that there may be nothing to divert them from the holy intercourse with Himself, which is His refreshment and delight.

The Lord sets apart for fellowship in intercessory prayer. —He leads three of the apostles into the shadows of Gethsemane, that they may add their intercessions with His. In each church there is a favoured band to whom He tells his secret anxiety for other

souls, and whom He leads out in prayer on the behalf of them and of the world.

The Lord sets apart for service. —Those that separate themselves from evil become vessels unto honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use. Do not be surprised if you are withdrawn from the molding crowd, from the ambitions and interests of earlier years; it is the Lord's way of engaging you for special service.

We can never forget how the Holy Ghost bade the early Church separate Barnabas and Saul to their appointed ministry. They were separated unto the Holy Ghost. A similar separation may become ours. Let us live in the world as those who are set apart for God, like the Temple vessels that might not be put, as Belshazzar attempted to put them, to idolatrous and lascivious purposes. Oh to know what God means when He puts His reserve on the soul, and says, This is my rest for ever, here will I dwell!

December 5

Psalm 5:3

“My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.”

IT is very important to consider the order of our petitions. No man would approach an earthly sovereign without taking time to consider how best to present his requests. He would consider the pleas on which to rely, the arguments to present, and the method in which he would be most likely to carry his case. Upon entering the presence of the great King, our Father, would it not well repay us to stay on the threshold for a moment to ask what petitions we are about to proffer, the order in which we should

arrange them, and the reasons we should adduce?

It is manifestly a mistake to pray at haphazard. There is too much random praying with us all. We do not return again and again to the same petition, pressing it home with all humility and reverence and arguing the case. Did not Abraham do this for the three of the plain?

Study the order of the Lord's prayer — the adoration and prostration of soul before God prior to supplication for definite gifts; the acquiescence in the Divine will before the prayer for daily bread; the entreaty for forgiveness before them can be a thought of deliverance from evil. Or consider the order of the High Priest's intercession for His own in John 17 before He pours out His soul in prayer for the world. Lay the wood "in order." Enter the temple of prayer through successive courts — Confession, Absolution Ascriptions of Praise, the Te Deum, the broken sentences, the outburst of intercession, as suggested by the Church of England liturgy. At the same time, do not forget to be perfectly natural.

Whilst the soul ascends the temple by regular steps, let there be the glad conviction of the tender love of the waiting Father.

December 6

Psalm 6:3

"My soul is also sore vexed: but thou, O LORD, how long?"

YOU have been long in coming, love says. So miserly are of the minutes, so leaden-paced is the beat of the pendulum, when our heart stands on the tip-toe of expectation. Moments lengthen to hours when we suffer and await deliverance, just as hours contract to moments when the heart is young and joyfull.

How long, Lord, ere the trial cease? — When we are entering into the furnace, we like to make bargains with God that it shall not last beyond a certain hour; but He never tells us, lest patience might miss her perfect work. He says simply, It is enough to suffer one moment at a time.

How long, Lord, ere deliverance arrive? — Long ago we sent for reinforcements; and since then the battle has been waxing more fierce. We have looked eagerly to the horizon to see the relieving column, clear-cut on the sky line; but in vain. We think we can hold out no more. We have strained at the oar to the last degree of strength and if some deliverance does not come to us, the fourth watch of night will see us drifting helplessly to destruction. “Where is thy God?” the enemy cries; and we are tempted to think ourselves forsaken and forgotten.

How long, Lord, ere the Advent break? — He said that He would come quickly — but the weary centuries pass; and, strain our ears as we may, we cannot detect His princely footfall along the corridor of time.

Cease, fond heart, thy complaining. Delay is not denial. He counts a thousand years as a day. He is coming on the wings of every wind; already He is nigh, even at the doors. Never a moment too early — but not a moment too late.

December 7

Psalm 7:8

“The LORD shall judge the people: judge me, O LORD, according to my righteousness, and according to mine integrity that is in me.”

SPECIFIC charges were being made against David, of which he knew himself to be absolutely innocent. He would not have dared to challenge God thus, if the whole of his life was passing under review. In that case there would have been no hesitation in confessing that, taken generally, he was a sinful man. Similarly, God's children are often accused of wrongs of which they are absolutely innocent. In such case they have a right to declare their innocence before their fellows; then if this avail not to procure their acquittal, they must turn to God, and ask Him to interpose.

But what a question this suggests! Are you able, child of God, to declare that, as far as you have the light, you are living righteously, soberly, godly, in this present world? Is your life right-wise — that is, four-square with the demands of God's law, able to bear the test of His line and plummet? Can you assert your integrity? Integrity is derived from the Latin integer, a whole, a number unbroken by fractions. Are you whole-hearted? Or, to use the grand old word, is your heart perfect before God? If it be, it matters very little what men shall say of your character. If a man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but glorify God on this behalf.

What is said is aimed rather at the Master than the servant. God becomes responsible for your vindication. He will arise and show Himself strong, putting to silence the enemy and avenger. Trust your reputation with God, and, in the meanwhile, go on doing His will. There is no harm in calmly and temperately attesting your innocence; but if this avails not to stay the storm, bend before it. Do not appeal to law. God will vindicate you.

December 8

Psalm 8:6

“Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet:”

YES, broken, beaten, fallen, O child of man, thou wast to have dominion. Not only over cattle, birds and fish, but over thine own wonderful nature. Within thee there is a realm as full of multitudinous life as Paradise was when God brought the animals to Adam that he might name them; and over all this thou wast meant to rule. Yea, thou wert made to have dominion also over the wicked spirits that are thy sworn foes. A royal, regnant, victorious life was that which the Creator inbreathed. There is no reason, on God’s side, or in the original constitution, why thou shouldest not exercise thy dominion. Remember, thou wast made to have dominion.

We see not yet all things put under us. There is open revolt and anarchy within. The will resembles the ancient kings whose sway was limited by proud and strong barons. The animal creation largely defies us, and is in this the symbol of our loss of authority everywhere. But look away to Jesus. This old psalm is fulfilled in Him. His glorious nature rose, by its inherent glory, to the right hand of power. All authority is His in heaven and on earth. And in proportion as we identify ourselves with Him, and receive His life, we regain our lost dominion. He makes us kings and priests unto God. We share a life which neither death nor the devil can master.

What shall we say of the excellency of His name, who is not only our Creator, but our Redeemer, and who at such great cost to Himself has replaced on our brows the crown that sin tore from them? He made us to have dominion by the word of creation. He made us kings unto God by His blood. His name shall, therefore, be honoured through all the earth.

December 9

Psalm 9:10

“And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, LORD, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.”

WE do not trust, because we do not know. If we were once know God, it would seem as absurd to doubt Him as to fear that we should fly off at a tangent from the surface of the earth. Men complain of their little faith: the remedy is in their own hands; let them set themselves to know God. We may know about God, and yet not know Him. We may hear what others say about Him, but have no direct and personal acquaintance. “That I may know Him,” (Philippians 3:10) said the Apostle.

The materials for the knowledge of God are all around thee; make use of them. Think of the promises by which God has bound Himself to succour those that come to Him; of the record of His gracious interpositions for His saints; of the necessity that He should maintain His character and reputation in the face of the universe.

Above all, argue, as Jesus bade, from your own heart. Would you give stones to hungry babes, and scorpions into childish hands?

Would you desert a forlorn and hunted soul that trusted? Would you insist on a certain measure of agony before stepping in to deliver?

Would you take delight in inflicting needless anguish? And will God? Trust may be read as the superlative of true. To trust is to count God true, though circumstances belie; to count Him truer than the melancholy forebodings of our hearts; to count Him our truest and tenderest Friend. “Yea, let God be true, but every man a liar.” (Romans 3:4)

But for all this, you must make time. You cannot know a friend in

harried interviews, much less God. So you must steep yourself in deep, long thoughts of His nearness and love.

December 10

Psalm 10:1

“Why standest thou afar off, O LORD? why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble?”

MEN in sorrow do not always speak wisely; and they ask many questions which God does not answer. Here is one. God does not stand afar off and hide Himself in times of trouble. As the psalmist sings, in a happier mood, “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” (Psalm 46:1) But He permits trouble to pursue us as though He were indifferent to its overwhelming pressure; that we may be brought to an end of ourselves, and led to discover the treasures of darkness, the immeasurable gains of tribulation. No cross, no crown. No pain, no gain.

We may be sure that He who permits the suffering is with us in it. The form of the Fourth may be hard to distinguish, but it is there in the fire. It may be that we shall only see Him when the trial is passing; but we must dare to believe that He never leaves the crucible. Our eyes are holden; and we cannot behold Him whom our soul loveth. It is dark — the bandages blind us so that we cannot see the form of our High priest. But He is there, deeply touched. Let us not rely on feeling, but on faith in His unswerving fidelity; and though we see Him not, let us talk to Him in whispers as though we could detect Him.

“I take the pain, Lord Jesus, from thine own hand, The strength to bear it bravely, Thou wilt command.”

Directly we begin to speak to Jesus, as being literally present, though His presence is veiled, there comes an answering voice which shows that He is in the shadow, keeping watch upon His own. Do not be afraid of the darkness. Behind the cloud, the sun is shining. Little child, your Father is as near when you journey through the dark tunnel as when under the open heaven! Go nearer, and you will feel Him!

December 11

Psalm 11:5

“The LORD trieth the righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth.”

DO not be surprised if you are passing through trials. The righteous Lord is exercising you towards righteousness, that your face may ever behold His in unswerving communion. As the trainer of a young athlete will place him, now in one position, and again in another, to call certain muscles into play, to strengthen them by use, and to make the whole organization supple and subservient to the impulses of the soul, so God tries us — to call into operation, and test by use, each faculty of our being.

“Trials make the promise sweet,

Trials give new life to prayer;

Trials bring us to his feet,

Lay us low, and keep us there.”

There is a great difference between the temptings of Satan and the tryings of the Lord. The former are intended to make us fall; the great adversary takes pleasure in showing how weak and

sinful we are, and in casting us down to destruction. The latter, that we may be led out towards faith, patience, courage, meekness, and other worldliness. "Tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience, hope." (Romans 5:3,4) Whatever spiritual power is latent within us, we may be unaware of its value or helpfulness till it is called into exercise by trial, But when once it has been summoned into manifestation, it becomes the invaluable possession of all after time.

There is this consolation in trial, that at least we are not reprobates. The Lord trieth the righteous. The lapidary does not waste his time in cutting common pebbles. If we endure chastisement, we are clearly not bastards, but sons. Our Father loves us too much to let us miss the rich fruit, that is, reward us when all the pruning is over.

December

December 12

Psalm 12:6

“The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.”

WHAT a contrast is presented in this Psalm between God’s words and man’s! “They speak vanity . . with flattering lips and with a double heart . .” (Psalm 12:2) God never flatters; His words are absolutely pure because they have passed through the furnace of His holiness, but they are therefore absolutely reliable and trustworthy.

As silver enriches its owner, so does the Word of God enrich its lovers. Nothing so strengthens the intellect, clears the judgment, enlarges the views, purifies the taste, quickens the imagination, and educates the whole man. The humblest day-laborer who imbibes the Bible becomes rich in thought and speech, and able to dispense his riches to others.

As silver is beautiful to the eye, so fair is the Word of God. After a boy born blind had been suddenly possessed of sight through an operation by a skilful oculist, his mother, led him out-of-doors, took off the bandages, and gave him his first view of sunshine, sky and flowers. “Oh, mother,” he cried, “why did you never tell me it was so beautiful!” With starting tears, she said, “I tried to tell you, my dear, but you could not understand me.” We need

opened eyes, and then the Bible is more to be desired than fine gold.

As silver is pure, so is the Word of God; and it purifies. It has been the main purifying agent of the world. Though it deals with the corruptions of the human heart, it does so in such a delicate and holy manner as to excite within us something of the abhorrence of the Holy God. Like the passage of water through a sieve, it cleanses the heart and life.

December 13

Psalm 13:6

“I will sing unto the LORD, because he hath dealt bountifully with me.”

HERE is the man who had sorrow in his heart all the day breaking into song! We do not find that his troubles were any less. The enemy was still exalted over him, and boasted of having prevailed; it seemed indeed as though he must soon sleep the sleep of death. But he never let go his trust. Whatever were his outward discomforts and trials, he clung to his God and waited patiently for Him; with the result that out of his stormy griefs he built a Bethel, and in the midst of his anguish broke out into song.

When we are sitting under the shadow of severe trial, God can wrap us about with the garment of praise, and fill our mouths with singing. Although the fig-tree does not blossom, and there is no fruit in the vines, yet the soul may rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of salvation. You cannot starve a man who is feeding on God's promises; and you cannot make that man or woman wretched who has a clean conscience, the smile of God, and the love of Jesus in the soul.

When brave old Thomas Halyburton lost his much-loved son, he made this record: “This day has been a day to be remembered. O my soul never forget what this day I reached. My soul had smiles that almost wasted nature. Oh, what a sweet day! About half-an-hour after the Sabbath, my child, after a sharp conflict, slept pleasantly in Jesus, to whom pleasantly he was so often given...

Jesus came to me in the third watch of the night, walking upon the waters... He stilled the tempest in my soul, and lo! there was a great calm.” When God is bereaving us of all else, He may so fill us with Himself that we shall magnify His bountifulness.

December 14

Psalm 14:7

“Oh that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! when the LORD bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad.”

IT is good to have an eye on the future, even though we get sometimes a little weary of waiting, and impatient of delay.

Here a captive soul transports itself to the hours when its captivity shall be ended; and although it cannot altogether suppress the “Oh!” of longing desire, it dilates with ecstasy, as it anticipates the outburst of joy that shall hail the Divine deliverance.

Let us look on and up. Bunyan tells us that the heart of the Pilgrim “waxed warm about the place whither he was going.” A real lover of Christ, who knows something of the law of sin in his members, and of the dull weight of this mortal tabernacle, is apt to have, at times, eager desires for his home and his glorious

inheritance. Paul was one of the most eager of workers, but he was ever dwelling on the blessed hope.

“When,” exclaimed Baxter, “when, O my soul, hast thou most forgot thy wintry sorrows? Is it not when thou hast got above, closest to Jesus Christ, and hast conversed with Him, and viewed the mansions of glory, and filled thyself with sweet foretastes, and talked with the inhabitants of the higher world?” Such devout anticipations do not slacken our work down here during this little while. It is said of Samuel Rutherford that he was always studying, always preaching, and always visiting the sick; but it was he who exclaimed, “Oh, time, run fast! Oh, fair day, when wilt thou dawn?”

Oh, shadows, flee away! Oh, well-beloved Bridegroom, be Thou to me like the roe or the young hart on the mountains!”

“The best is yet to be—

The last, for which the first was made.”

December 15

Psalm 15:1

“LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?”

THIS holy soul was not content to stand in the outer court without the sacred tent; he coveted to enter where the High Priest entered, and to live there. It was impossible then; the way into the Holiest was not made manifest. No ordinary worshipper might pass the Vail, and the high priest who passed it once a year remained but a few moments.

How marvelously different our experience may be! We have boldness to enter into the holy place, and remain there, by the blood of Jesus; and, by the enabling of His Priesthood, we may spend our entire lives under the consciousness of the presence and favor of God. It is much like the servants of Solomon, to stand before our King, and to hear Him speaking, bidding us either to perform His errands, or fold the wings of activity in rapt communion.

This is not your experience? Then look carefully through the conditions which this Psalm enumerates. Perhaps you are not transparently truthful; or your tongue is not carefully controlled; Or you are not perfectly honourable in your business dealings; or you do not know the power of the blood of Christ, as it cleanses from dead works to serve the living God.

It is worth any sacrifice to maintain this habit of indwelling the Most Holy Place. Ask that it may become your second nature. The Lord Jesus will secure this, since He was appointed for us in things that pertain to God. Whenever anything in the inner life seems faulty and deficient, we may turn with unabated confidence to our High Priest, asking Him to adjust it, to bring us into the presence of God, and to keep us there.

December 16

Psalm 16:10

“For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.”

THIS hymn is for ever sacred because of its application by the Holy Ghost to our Savior’s resurrection (Acts 2). It was as though our Lord had stayed His soul upon these words as He left this world and entered the unseen. The last words He uttered were of

committal to His Father, and then He commenced to traverse the land of shadow. “Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?” (Ephesians 4:9) The Apostle Peter says that He went to visit the spirits in prison.

Whither He went is not material — it is enough for our purpose that He sang, as He went, this hymn of immortal hope. Sure that He was the Father’s beloved, He knew that He would not be left to Hades, nor suffered to see corruption. He knew that there was a path of life somewhere, which God would show.

Whenever you are stepping down into the dark, unable to see a hand’s breadth before you, and just letting the foot fall from step to step — it may be because of some act of obedience to conscience, or because you are called to enter the unknown and untried, or even death itself — cheer your heart with this holy Psalm. God will never desert the soul that absolutely honours and obeys Him. His way leads to the light through the dark, to the deathless through death, to the abounding fruit-bearing through desertion and loneliness. How lonely the vine-stock is through the winter! Follow Him, He will show.

“She is sinking very fast,” whispered an attendant in the dying chamber of a godly woman. “No, no,” was the quick response of the departing saint, who had overheard the words: “no; I am not sinking; I am in the arms of my Savior.”

December 17

Psalm 17:15

“As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.”

TO a good man, then, this is the world of dream and shadow, and death is the awakening. We are like men asleep in some chamber that looks towards the eastern sky. Outside is the day with its revealing beams, but our heavy eyes are closed to it all. “Here and there, some lighter sleeper with thinner eyelids or face turned to the sun is half conscious of a vague brightness and feels the light, though he sees not the wealth of color it reveals. Such souls are our saints and prophets; but most of us sleep on unconscious.” But the moment is at hand when we shall awake and start up and declare ourselves fools for having counted dreams as realities, whilst we were oblivious to the eternal realities.

When we awake we shall behold the face of God. Likeness is properly “form,” and is the same word employed in reference to Moses, who saw the similitude of the Lord. We shall see Him as He is. There will be an outward revelation and manifestation of His lovely and holy character, and it will satisfy us completely.

“The glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” (2 Corinthians 4:6) And we shall be satisfied. The mind will be satisfied with His truth, the heart with His love, the will with His authority. We shall need nothing else. Heaven itself, with its outspread mystery of beauty, will not divert our gaze from God, nor contribute to our satisfaction.

To know God, to stand before Him, to realize that we are accepted in the righteousness of the Well-beloved — this will be enough for evermore.

“This life’s a dream, an empty show; But the bright work to which I go hath joys substantial and sincere: When shall I wake, and find me there?”

December 18

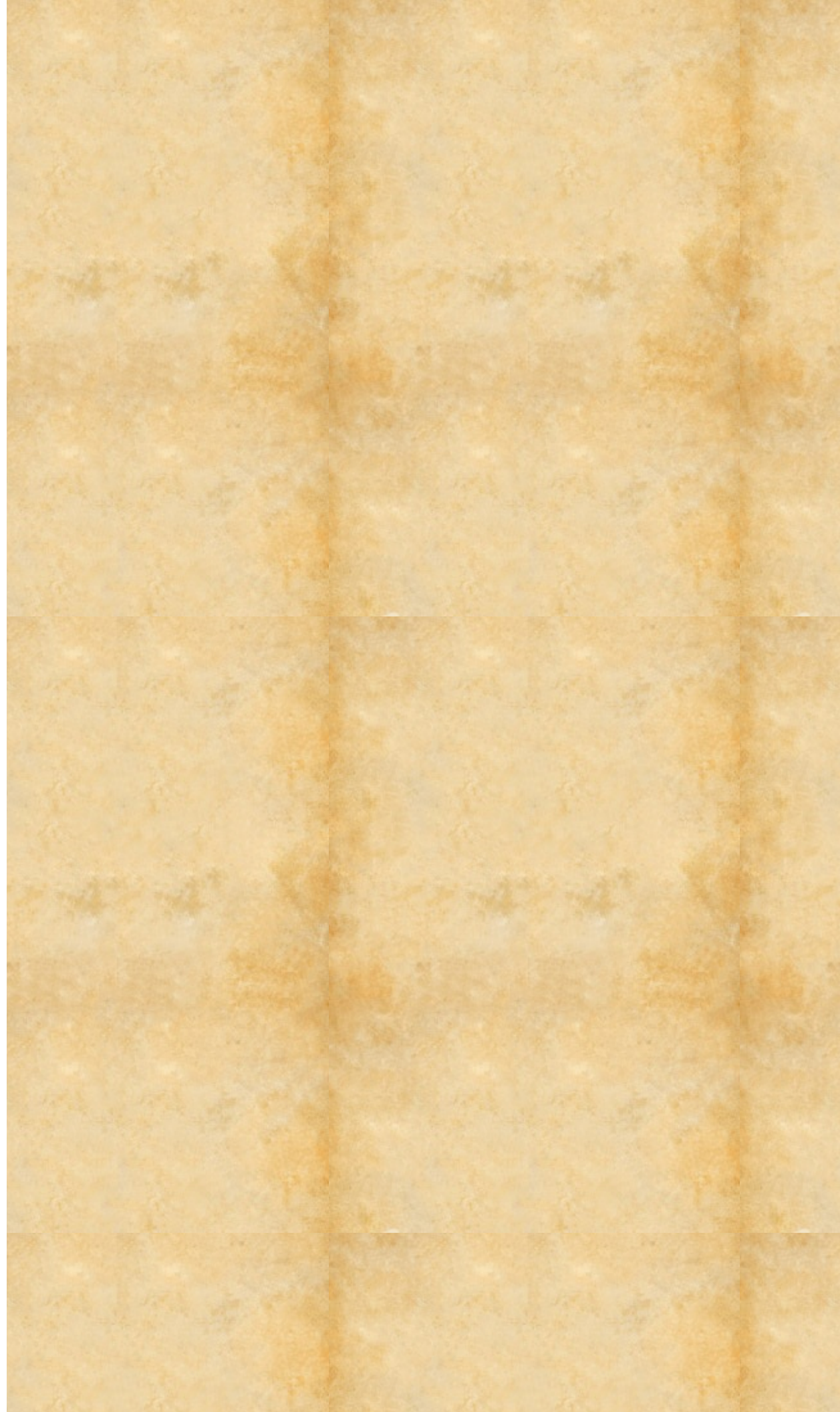
Psalm 18:35

“Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy right hand hath holden me up, and thy gentleness hath made me great.”

THE Nasmyth hammer which can pulverize blocks of tough metal, will break the shell of a nut without hurting the kernel.

In this it resembles this Psalm, in the earlier part of which there is one of the grandest descriptions that words can give of God's mighty interposition on behalf of His threatened child. But here we are told that it is the Divine gentleness which has made him great. It is as though God's power were exerted against our foes, whilst our education is undertaken by His love.

Review your life. See the perils from which you have been rescued; the process of your education; the slow degrees by which you have climbed to any eminence of Christian character; the method by which you have attained the power of influencing others: is it not attributable to the gentleness of the Good Shepherd? Not by sudden cataclysms and catastrophes; not by the earthquake, the fire, or the hurricane; not even by the stringent requirements of law; but by a succession of tenderest, gentlest movements of the Divine Spirit. He has remonstrated in whispered accents; He has seemed grieved and sad; He has turned and looked; He has sent a message by a woman's lips; He has put a little child into your life to lead you; He has poured on you one continual stream of sunshine. Now, it has been the distilling of dew; and again, soft showers on the mown grass, and through all, the purpose has run of eliminating the self-life, and leading you to the full stature of the perfect man. The strongest soul I ever knew, one who seemed to have been fashioned by God's mightiest strokes, was wont, to life's eventide, to attribute all to the effect of God's gentleness.



December

December 19

Psalm 19:12

“Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults.”

IT is not likely that we shall be kept from the great transgression unless we are preserved from presumptuous sins; and these in turn will befall us unless we have been cleansed from hidden faults. Just as the germ of disease taken into the system will presently reveal itself in an outburst of malignant fever, so hidden faults flower out into presumptuous sins, and these into great transgression. “Then lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin; and the sin, when it is full-grown bringeth forth death.”

First, we need forgiveness for secret sins. The Jewish law made large provision for sins of ignorance. A man might unawares walk across a grave, or touch some article of furniture which was ceremonially unclean, and so became defiled. Even though unconscious of actual transgression, he would find his communion with God broken. Thus, after the holiest day we have ever spent we need to ask for cleansing in the precious blood, for which God has discerned, but which in the twilight of our ignorance, and because we compared ourselves with those beneath us in spiritual attainment, have escaped notice.

Next, we need deliverance from the love and power of sin, in lower depths than we have ever realized. We desire to pass muster at the bar, not only of our neighbours and ourselves, but

of God. We desire that the Spirit should antagonize the flesh in depths below the reach of the plumb-line of our consciousness. We desire the inner purity of heart. But this is peculiarly God's prerogative. It is His work to cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of His Holy Spirit "Cleanse Thou me."

December 20

Psalm 20:6

"Now know I that the LORD saveth his anointed; he will hear him from his holy heaven with the saving strength of his right hand."

THIS was no doubt true of David as the anointed king of Israel, and of the Lord Jesus for whom the Father hath promised that He will subdue all things under Him; but it is also true of every saint who has been anointed with the Holy Ghost. Christian means an anointed one. Alas, that in so many cases the name is a misnomer! And men cannot claim the saving strength of God's right hand because they have not bent head and heart beneath the chrism of the Holy Spirit. How is it with thee? Art thou included in what Paul said, "Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God;" (2 Corinthians 1:21) and in what John said, "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you ..." (1 John 2:27) If so, there can be no doubt that Jehovah will ever save thee with a present-tense salvation. He saveth those whom He anointeth with the saving strength of His right hand.

Dost thou doubt this? Sayest thou that the annoyances and solicitations, the pitfalls and snares, the antagonisms and temptations of thy life, are so great as to offer an insuperable obstacle to thy entire deliverance from fret, irritation and failure?

Then turn to the marvelous phrase that follows, and tell me, if

thou canst, the meaning of the saving strength of God's right hand. Is not God's right hand strong enough? And notice that its strength is pledged not to destroy, but to save. All the strength of God's right hand goes forth to save unto the uttermost. Look away from adversary and temptation, and keep murmuring to thyself, "He shall save me today, and always, with the saving strength of His right hand." And is not the right hand of the Most High the place where Jesus sits? Is not the right hand of God moved by the love that died on Calvary? "And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not;" (Revelation 1:17)

December 21

Psalm 21:3

"For thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness: thou settest a crown of pure gold on his head."

GOD is always beforehand with us. The word "preventest" is not as familiar to our modern English as it was when the Bible was translated. Then it meant "that which comes or goes before." And the idea is that God goes before us, preparing our way, and laying up supplies of grace to anticipate our need. This is the meaning of the prayer: "Prevent us, O Lord, in all our doings."

Go into the chamber where the mother is preparing for the advent of a little babe. You have no difficulty in telling what the wants of the child will be by all the articles which her tender forethought is providing; and when presently the little one opens its eyes in this strange, new world, it finds that it has been prevented with the blessings of goodness.

For ages prior to the appearance of man on the earth, the great heart of God was exercised in preparing for him. To please his

ear, Music tuned her lyre; to satisfy his eye, the Great Artist wrought variety of colour and form; to warm him, seams of coal were laid down; to give him drink, rivers poured from crystal urns of snow-clad peaks; and Adam might have adored God's prevenient grace.

Think, for instance, of the color, the light and scent and driving-power in rock-oils!

Still more is this the case in the kingdom of redemption. God has stored all the blessings of goodness in Jesus. In eternal ages, in the incarnation, the cross, the ascension, He has prepared beforehand for every possible need of our spiritual life. Whenever you pray, remember that you are not to procure unthought-of help; but to avail yourself of the blessings of goodness with which God has anticipated your coming.

December 22

Psalm 22:31

"They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this."

THIS is the Hebrew equivalent for the words, "It is finished."

Surely it was meet that the Psalm of the Cross, which our Lord must have recited to Himself during those hours of anguish, should close with this triumphant outburst.

Finished, the ceremonial law. — It had served its purpose in prefiguring the person and work of Jesus; but now the rending of the vail betokened the abolition of the forms of the earlier dispensation.

The things which could be shaken passed, that those which could not be shaken might remain.

Finished, the fulfillment of prophecy. — Very diverse predictions had met, and were closed, as gates are when the king has passed through. That He should be a King and a Sufferer; a Priest and a Victim; a Lion of the tribe of Judah, and a Lamb for substitution.

Finished, the work which was given to Him to do. — The Messiah was to be cut off, not for Himself, to finish transgressions, to make an end of sins, to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness. And each of these great ends was realized.

Finished, the work of atonement. — As the Substitute and Sin-bearer, the Lord Jesus stood with the sins of the race meeting on Him; but when He died He put them away by the sacrifice of Himself. They were borne into the land of forgetfulness, from which they can never be recovered. The demand of Divine justice was satisfied. Mercy and truth had met. Righteousness and peace embraced. And this cry of a finished redemption shall be finally crowned by a cry of complete restitution (Revelation 21:6).

December 23

Psalm 23:6

“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.”

WE are well escorted, with a Shepherd in front and these twin angels behind! Someone called them watch-dogs; but I prefer to think of them as angels. Do you not see the special beauty of

these fair, strong angel-forms following? We make such mistakes, give unnecessary pain, leave work ill-done and half-done, often succeed rather in raising dust than cleaning the rooms which we would fain sweep! It is good to think that two such angels follow close upon our track as we go through life, putting kind constructions on our actions, disentangling knots, making good deficiencies, and preventing the consequences of ill-advised and inconsiderate action pursuing us to the bitter end.

There are mothers who are always tidying up after their children.

The little ones have had a rare time, which has left confusion and disorder; but the mother comes, mending the broken toys, stitching the rent garments, making everything neat and tidy. As the ambulance corps goes over the battle-field; as time festoons with verdure ruins and decay; as love puts the most tender construction on word and act — so the love of God follows us.

His goodness imputes to us the noble motive, though the act itself has been a failure; credits us with what was in our heart; reckons us the full wage, though we have only wrought one hour.

His mercy forgives, obliterates the traces of our sins from His heart, undoes their ill-effect so far as possible towards others, and treats us as if we had never transgressed. Do not fear the future. God's angels do not tire. What has been will be, in all worlds, and to all eternity.

All the days, even those in which Satan seems to have obtained permission to sift.

December 24

Psalm 24:7, 9

“Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. ... Lift up your heads,

O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.”

THIS is what we all want. We must have the King of Glory within. To have Him without, even though He be on the Throne, will not avail. He must come in to abide, to reign, to sway His sceptre, to keep the everlasting doors through which He has passed. This has been our difficulty, that those doors have so often been forced. We want one who is strong and mighty to keep them strongly barred against our mortal foe.

This Psalm was first realized in the entrance of the Ark into Mount Zion, when God went up with a merry noise. It is supposed that the first part of the verse was a challenge from the warders of the ancient gates, whilst the second was a reply from the escorting band that accompanied the sacred emblem. It was a moment of vast triumph when the Ark of the King of Glory passed to the ancient city of the Jebusites.

A still greater fulfillment took place when Jesus, having overcome the sharpness of death, victor over sin and the grave, mighty in battle, vanquished principalities and powers, and entered the city of God. Then to and fro these challenges and answers flew between the angels that awaited Him, and those who accompanied.

But the most vital fulfillment is when the heart opens to receive Him, and He enters, to go out no more, and to hold it against all comers. Oh, heated and baffled saint, it is impossible for thee to fail when Jesus, all-victorious, garrisons thy heart! He is strong and mighty. Dost thou want strength? It is in the strong Son of God.

Dost thou want might! He is all-mighty. Dost thou want

deliverance from thy foes? He is mighty in battle.

December 25

Psalm 25:14

“The secret of the LORD is with them that fear him; and he will show them his covenant.”

WHAT marvellous words! They remind one of the sapphire work which the elders saw at the foot of the throne, and which was like “the body of heaven in his clearness.” (Exodus 24:10) Three different renderings are suggested.

The Secret of the Lord. — To some it is permitted to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven. To these the white stone is given, on which is engraven a name, which only he knows that receives it. There are secret passages of love between Christ and the believing soul, which it would not be lawful for it to utter. High fellowship: deep blessedness. Things which eye hath not seen. Jesus revealed His secrets when Judas had gone forth.

The Counsel of the Lord. — “His Name shall be called...

Counsellor.” (Isaiah 9:6) He draws near to those that fear to grieve Him, and gives them counsel. He instructs them in the way that He chooses for them; He guides them in His truth and teaches them; He guides them in judgment; and tells them, as He did Abraham, what He is about to do.

The Friendship of the Lord. — “Ye are my friends,” said Jesus, “if ye do whatsoever I command you.” (John 15:14) He longs for friends — those to whom He can tell His desires, on whom He may impose implicit confidence, and who will be so taken up with Him as to be indifferent to everything else, their one

purpose to do His least bidding. Oh to be honored with the personal friendship of Jesus! It was a rare privilege to be entrusted with His secrets and to hear Him say, “ I call you not servants; ... but I have called you friends; ...” (John 15:15)

December

December 26

Psalm 26:6

“I will wash mine hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar, O LORD:”

THE Psalmist realized that he could not avail himself of all that was typified by the altar, unless, so far as he knew himself, he had washed his hands in innocency. But he also knew that the washing, to be effective, must be in costlier waters than those of his own innocency. The soul requires a Savior who comes by water and blood, not by water only.

The compassing of the altar is probably a picturesque way of describing the joyous or penitent circle of worshippers that gathered around the altar; and which needed to be prepared for by the usual lustrations, “Of the doctrine of baptisms and of laying on of hands.”

(Hebrews 6:2) We must separate ourselves from known sin, and wash our hands in innocency, if we are to enjoy the blessings of the altar and its sacred associations.

There is the sacrifice of the burnt-offering, which stands for Christ’s perfectness and entire devotedness to God on our behalf.

But how can we be utterly given up to God unless, so far as we know we are innocent of presumptuous and cherished sin?

There are the sacrifices of the meal-offering and the peace-offering. But how can we feed on Christ, or feast with Him in holy rapture, whilst we are concealing the stains of the hands that take the food?

There is the sacrifice of the sin-offering. But is it not a sacrilege to claim a share in its blessing if we permit those very sins which cost the Savior agony and tears? No, we must come out and be separate; we must be willing for God to examine and prove us; we must hate the congregation of the wicked, their conversation and ways; we must occupy ourselves perpetually with the Divine lovingkindness and truth. So only can we compass the altar of God, and taste its comfort and help.

December 27

Psalm 27:4

“One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in his temple.”

ONE purpose dominated prayer and life. It was never long absent from the Psalmist's thought. The men of one idea are irresistible. The arrowy stream will force its way through the toughest soil. See that all the prayers, incidents, and circumstances of life subserve one intense purpose. String all the beads on one thread. When the eye is single, the whole body is full of light.

The Psalmist's purpose. — What a blessing that the Psalmist's purpose may be ours! To dwell in the house of the Lord is to live within the veil in fellowship with God, in the habitual recollection

of His presence. To behold His beauty is to keep looking off unto Jesus. To inquire in His Temple is to commune with the Lord about all the concerns of home and business, of church and commonwealth. In senses of which the material Temple could give but a faint conception, we may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of our lives.

The Psalmist's search. — Let us seek after this as well as pray for it. Let it be the fixed purpose and resolution of every day. Let us begin with it in the morning, and at every spare moment remember that we have boldness to stand in the Most Holy Place. Oh to be as intent on this high quest as the man of science to discover nature's secrets; as the business man to make a fortune; as the brave explorer to extort the secret from the Polar Seas!

True prayer will never be presumptuous. It will not ask God to do for us what we may do for ourselves. It will ask as though all depended on asking, but it will seek as though all depended on seeking.

“Thrice blest, whose lives are faithful prayers; What souls possess themselves so pure?”

December 28

Psalm 28:9

“Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance: feed them also, and lift them up forever.”

THE people of God are here compared to a flock, scattered over many hills, marked by differing brands, sheltering in varied folds, but under the care of one Shepherd, and being conducted to one Home.

The holy soul is as eager for the welfare of the Lord's "beautiful flock" as He is. Whatever is dear to the loved ones is dear to the lover. You cannot love the pastor without taking a keen and constant interest in all that interests him, and especially in the sheep of his pasture, and the people of his hand. Hence when you are nearest the Lord, you are almost certain to begin pleading for His inheritance, and saying: "Save thy people; and bless thine inheritance: feed them also and lift them up forever."

"Lift them up forever." The Good Shepherd bare His flock through the desert, and carried them all the days of old. It is as easy for Him to bear a flock, as a single lamb. Jesus does not simply lead us to green pastures and still waters, He bears us, and He bears us up, and He does so forever. Never tiring, though He imparts infinite rest; never ceasing for a moment His shepherd-care. Are you depressed today? Are there strong influences dragging you down? Does your soul cleave to the dust? Let those strong arms and that tender breast lift you up forever. A dying child asked her father to place his arms beneath her weary, emaciated body. "Lift me,"

she said. He did so. "A little higher." He did so. "Higher, father."

And when he had lifted her as high as he could, the convulsive movement proved that Christ had come to lift her up forever.

December 29

Psalm 29:9

"The voice of the LORD maketh the hinds to calve, and discovereth the forests: and in his temple doth every one speak of his glory."

THIS psalm describes a thunderstorm gathering over the Mediterranean, passing with devastating fury over Palestine, and finally dissolving in floods of rain on the pasture-lands of Bashan and Gilead. But how differently such a scene is regarded!

To the man of the world it presents an interceding study, or awakes spasms of fear: to the man of God, contemplating the scene from his safe hiding in the Temple, it seems as though nature, with a myriad voices, were proclaiming the glory of God. Many storms are sweeping athwart the world just now. Our standpoint for watching them must be God's presence-chamber.

Somehow, everything that has been, is, and shall be; all that seems startling and dreadful; all that excites fear and foreboding — shall conduce to the glory of God. Wait, O child of God, in patient trust; Jehovah is King, and He shall sit as King forever; all is under law. "For of Him and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever." (Romans 11:36) Our body in the temple of the Holy Ghost: does every whit of it say, Glory? I know of few things that stir my heart more than the repeated ascription of "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost." But is that the refrain of our life? Outside there may be confusion and storm, wild chaos and desolation; but see to it that from your heart's shrine there rises moment after moment the ascription of "Glory be to Thee, O Thou most High."

"Glory to God, to God, he saith. Knowledge of suffering entereth, And life is perfected in death."

December 30

Psalm 30:5

"For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."

THE Hebrew might be rendered, “Weeping may come in to lodge at even”.

See, at nightfall, a black-vestured guest comes to thy heart. Thou must let him in; he brings a warrant from your King for his quartering and entertainment. But he is only a lodger; he has no abiding-place with thee; at daybreak he must be gone.

Canst thou not bear with him for these brief hours? It is only for the brief space of an Eastern summer-night. Let the first tint of the dawn flush yon sky, he will go. Like the ghosts of fable, he dies in the light.

Now, see, the morning breaks! Who is this hurrying up the hill, and knocking at the door? Hark to his joyous shout! Who is this?

Ah! It is Joy. The child of the morning light! The first-born of Resurrection! And he comes not as a lodger, but as the Lord and Master of Life, to abide forever. Oh, welcome him in the name of the Lord, and throw open each chamber and each closet in your heart, that all may be filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

And as he enters, sorrow and sighing flee away. They have passed out at the back as he came in at the front.

Joy in the morning at the resurrection of Jesus: Joy in the coming of the Savior for His bride: Joy as the Millennium breaks on the world: Joy when the Eternal Day comes to gladden those who have drunk of Christ’s sorrow, and shall share His bliss.

Child of God, be on the outlook to welcome Joy. Do not fear his advent, nor thrust him away. Milton’s L’Allegro is a truer presentation of Christian experience than Il Penseroso, “And thou shalt rejoice in every good thing which the Lord thy God hath given unto thee.” (Deuteronomy 26:11)

December 31

Psalm 31:7

“I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy: for thou hast considered my trouble; thou hast known my soul in adversities;”

MEN have a way of forgetting their companions when they fall into adversity. They do not know them or visit them, or recognize them if they meet them in the street. But the love of God is always most tender and considerate then. He seeks us out when the sky is shadowed, and life is overcast with somber tints.

Adversity, so far from alienating Him, draws Him closer, and brings out His tenderest, loveliest traits. He knows us in adversity.

It is only when we are overtaken by adversity that we are revealed by the innermost depths of our nature. God knows us in adversity. “And thou shalt remember,” said Moses, “all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, to prove thee, and to know what was in thine heart . . .” (Deuteronomy 8:2) What revelations of unsubdued pride and imperious self-will are afforded, when we are searched and tested by the fiery trial of pain!

“Thou hast known my soul in adversities.” Is it not enough that God should know? Need we go to all our friends and explain to them all we are called to endure? Is not this a needless addition to their sorrow, and the sorrow of the world? What a glorious piece of advice the Master gave, when He said, “Anoint thine head, and wash thy face; That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret, shall reward thee openly.” (Matthew 6:17,18)

“Thou know’st our bitterness! — our joys are thine!

No stranger Thou to all our wanderings wild!

**But yet Thou call’st us Brethren! Sweet repose Is in that word;—
the Lord who dwells on high Knows all, yet loves us better than
He knows.”**



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